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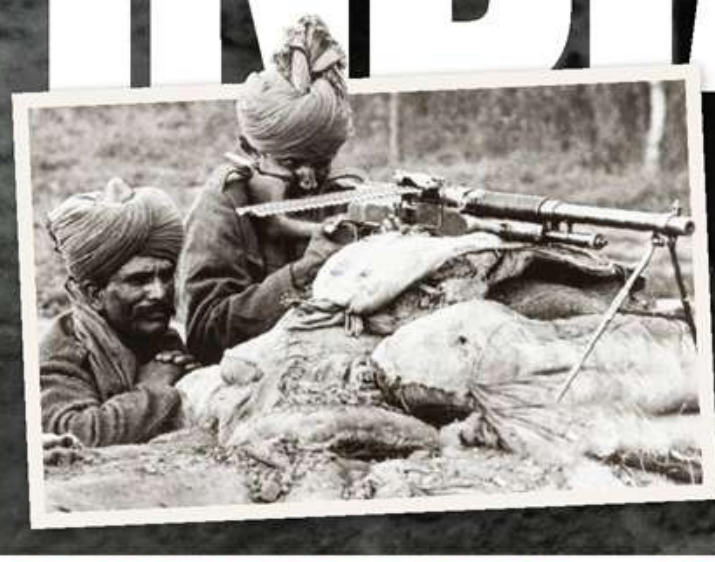
HISTORY of WAR

F2H BANSHEE
Inside the 1950s jet fighter

BIGGEST SEA BATTLE
Inside the epic WWII naval clash that crushed Japan's navy

THE RAJ IN WWI INDIAN CORPS
How colonial forces answered the Empire's call and held the line on the Western Front



TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS
Full background to the standoff threatening war in Asia

ANGEL OF DEATH
Evil Auschwitz doctor who escaped Nuremberg justice

TASKER WATKINS
Welsh hero who led the charge in the Falaise Pocket, 1944

FUTURE
ISSUE 112

KING & COUNTRY

UK AUTHORISED DEALER

Task Force South

IN APRIL 1982, BRITAIN was astonished to find itself in an undeclared war with Argentina over a group of bare, windswept, sparsely populated islands thousands of miles away in the South Atlantic.

To commemorate the ***40th Anniversary*** of a remarkable victory against almost impossible odds, **KING & COUNTRY** has released the first of a continuing series of ***1:30 scale, all-metal, hand-painted figures*** depicting some of the most famous British military units involved in this conflict... ***The Royal Marines*** and ***The Parachute Regiment.***

Shown here are the available ***'Bootnecks'*** and ***'Paras'*** of 3 Commando Brigade as they *'yomp'* towards Port Stanley and in the aftermath of the battle at *Goose Green.*

FUTURE RELEASES

Other 1:30 scale figures representing additional *British* and *Argentinean* units involved in the campaign together with fighting vehicles and artillery are also currently in development.

FOR MORE DETAILS...

And information about KING & COUNTRY'S ***'Arab /Israeli War'*** figures and fighting vehicles or any of K&C's many other historical series of ***1:30 scale, all-metal, hand-painted miniatures*** simply contact Britain's biggest and best, authorized dealer...

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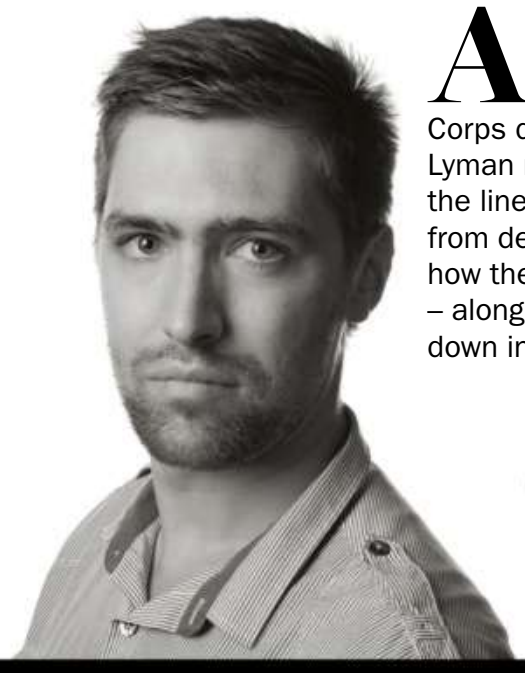
Welcome



Approximately 1.3 million Indian soldiers served during the First World War – almost twice the number of British. This contribution is often overlooked, as is the terrible sacrifice made by the Indian Corps during the perilous months in late 1914. This issue Dr Robert Lyman recounts how thousands of Indians laid down their lives and held the line against the German offensive, saving the depleted British Army from destruction after the retreat from Mons. In fact, Dr Lyman describes how the Indians continued to hold the line long into 1915, by which time – along with their Anglo-French allies – they found themselves bogged down in the mire of trench warfare.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

DR ROBERT LYMAN

Dr Lyman is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Research Fellow at Pembroke College, University of Oxford, and author of *A War of Empires*. On page 24 he recounts the Indian Corps' sacrifice on the Great War's Western Front, holding the line in 1914-15 and beyond.

MICHAEL HASKEW

This issue US-based writer and historian Mike takes a look at the history of the world's most powerful navy: from 1812 to the Cold War (p12). And in Great Battles he recounts arguably that navy's biggest victory, at Leyte Gulf (p38).

MIGUEL MIRANDA

An expert on South-East Asian military history and arms industry, on page 32 Miguel takes us through the origins of the Taiwan Crises, how they have affected the region and why the ongoing standoff threatens a new deadly conflict.

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George Washington's camp chest

© Alamy

WAR in FOCUS

INSPECTING THE GRENADIERS

17 May 1944

Princess Elizabeth inspects an honour guard during a royal visit to 2nd (Armoured) Battalion, Grenadier Guards at Hove in East Sussex, England. It was as the colonel of the Grenadier Guards that she had undertaken her first solo appearance on a visit to the regiment the previous year. Aged only 18 in this picture, Elizabeth was inspecting the Guards as part of the Allied preparations for D-Day. The princess herself became an honorary second subaltern in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in February 1945.

WAR in FOCUS

A CIGARETTE BREAK

c.1870

German signallers take a break during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). This conflict culminated in the unification of Germany for the first time, although its soldiers fought under the banner of the 'North German Confederation'. This de facto federal state existed from July 1867 to December 1870 and was dominated by Prussia. Eighty percent of the Confederation's population was Prussian, which was the likely nationality of these pictured soldiers. They are seen pausing for a rest while laying down telegraph lines.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

YPRES AT NIGHT

Year painted: 1918

British Army officer Paul Nash served on the Western Front as an Official War Artist. He was shocked by the devastation and during one period completed 50 drawings of the front line. One of these was *The Ypres Salient at Night* that he painted from an eyewitness sketch in 1917. Completed the following year, it shows soldiers on a trench fire step being surprised by a star shell lighting up the battlefield. There are also soldiers beyond a flooded shell hole who are overlooked by shattered tree stumps.

© Alamy

© Alamy

TIMELINE OF THE...

US NAVY

The United States' naval service has risen from its small, rebellious origins to become the most powerful fleet in the world

WAR OF 1812

The navy once again fights the British at sea but is heavily outnumbered. Many ships are blockaded by the Royal Navy but the Americans still win victories at Lake Champlain and Lake Erie, as well as dramatic naval duels.

1775-85

CONTINENTAL NAVY 01

The fledgling United States forms the Continental Navy during the American Revolutionary War. The navy's aim is to disrupt British maritime commercial shipping, with its fleet consisting of converted merchant vessels. It is dissolved after the end of the war.

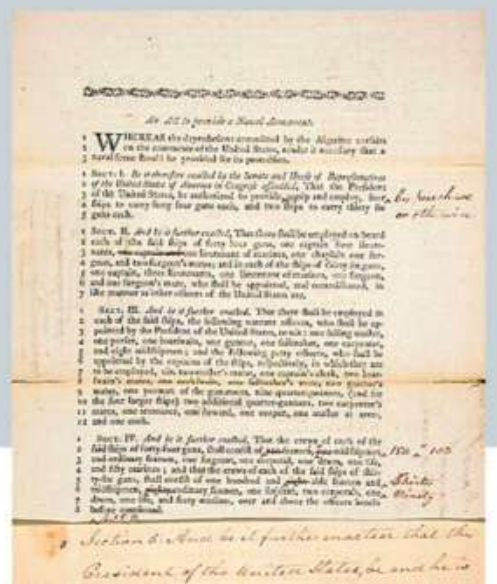
John Paul Jones raises the Stars and Stripes on an American warship for the first time, 7 December 1775

27 March 1794

NAVAL ACT 02

The 3rd United States Congress passes an act to construct six frigates "to provide a Naval Armament", which is signed into law by President George Washington. These vessels are the first ships of the modern US Navy.

The first page of the 1794 Naval Act



An Act to provide a Naval Armament.

WHEREAS the depredations committed by the Algerine corsairs on the commerce of the United States, render it necessary that a naval force should be provided for its protection.

SECT. I. *Be it therefore enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States, be authorized to provide, equip and employ, four ships to carry forty four guns each, and two ships to carry thirty six guns each.*

SECT. II. *And be it further enacted,* That there shall be employed on board each of the said ships of forty four guns, one captain, four lieutenants, one lieutenant of marines, one chaplain, one surgeon, and two surgeon's mates; and in each of the ships of thirty six guns, one captain, three lieutenants, one lieutenant of marines, one surgeon, and one surgeon's mate, who shall be appointed, and commissioned, in the manner as other officers of the United States are.

SECT. III. *And be it further enacted,* That there shall be employed in each of the said ships, the following warrant officers, who shall be appointed by the President of the United States, to wit: one sailing master, one purser, one boatswain, one gunner, one gunsmith, one carpenter, and eight midshipmen; and the following petty officers, who shall be appointed by the captains of the ships, respectively, in whichever are to be employed, to wit: one master's mate, one captain's clerk, two boatswain's mates, one sailmaker, one gunsmith's mate, two gunner's mates, one yeoman of the gunroom, nine quartermasters, (and for the four larger ships) two additional quartermasters, two carpenter's mates, one armourer, one steward, one cockswain, one sailmaker's mate, and one cook.

SECT. IV. *And be it further enacted,* That the crews of each of the said ships of forty four guns, shall consist of ~~two hundred~~ [illegible] seamen, two hundred ordinary seamen, one hundred and ~~eighty~~ [illegible] landsmen, one hundred and fifty marines; and that the crews of each of the said ships of thirty six guns, shall consist of one hundred and ~~eighty~~ [illegible] seamen, one hundred ordinary seamen, one hundred landsmen, one hundred and ~~fifty~~ [illegible] marines, one hundred and ~~fifty~~ [illegible] boys, one hundred and ~~fifty~~ [illegible] ordinary seamen, one hundred landsmen, one hundred and fifty marines, one hundred and ~~fifty~~ [illegible] boys, one hundred and forty seamen, over and above the officers hereinbefore mentioned.

SECT. V. *And be it further enacted,* That the President of the United States, be and he is

1801-15

BARBARY WARS 03

The USA joins Sweden and Sicily in fighting Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean during two wars. The pirates demand tribute from American merchant ships but the US Navy bombards several North African cities to ensure safe passage for civilian vessels.

USS Philadelphia burns during the Second Battle of Tripoli Harbor, 14 July 1804

1812-15

USS Constitution wins a famous victory against HMS Guerriere, 19 August 1812. The Americans capture the British crew before burning the stricken Royal Navy frigate

USS Monitor clashes with CSS Virginia during the Battle of Hampton Roads, 9 March 1862. It is the first engagement between ironclads in naval history

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The Federal and Confederate navies fight for control of strategically important waterways, both on the American coast and inland. The US Navy wins the first modern naval conflict that sees the use of ironclad ships, mines, torpedoes and submarines.

"THE US NAVY WINS THE FIRST MODERN NAVAL CONFLICT THAT SEES THE USE OF IRONCLAD SHIPS, MINES, TORPEDOES AND SUBMARINES"

1846-48 — 1861-65 — 1898

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR 04

During the Siege of Veracruz, the navy assists in the first large-scale amphibious assault conducted by American armed forces. Meanwhile, the Pacific Squadron helps to capture California from Mexico.

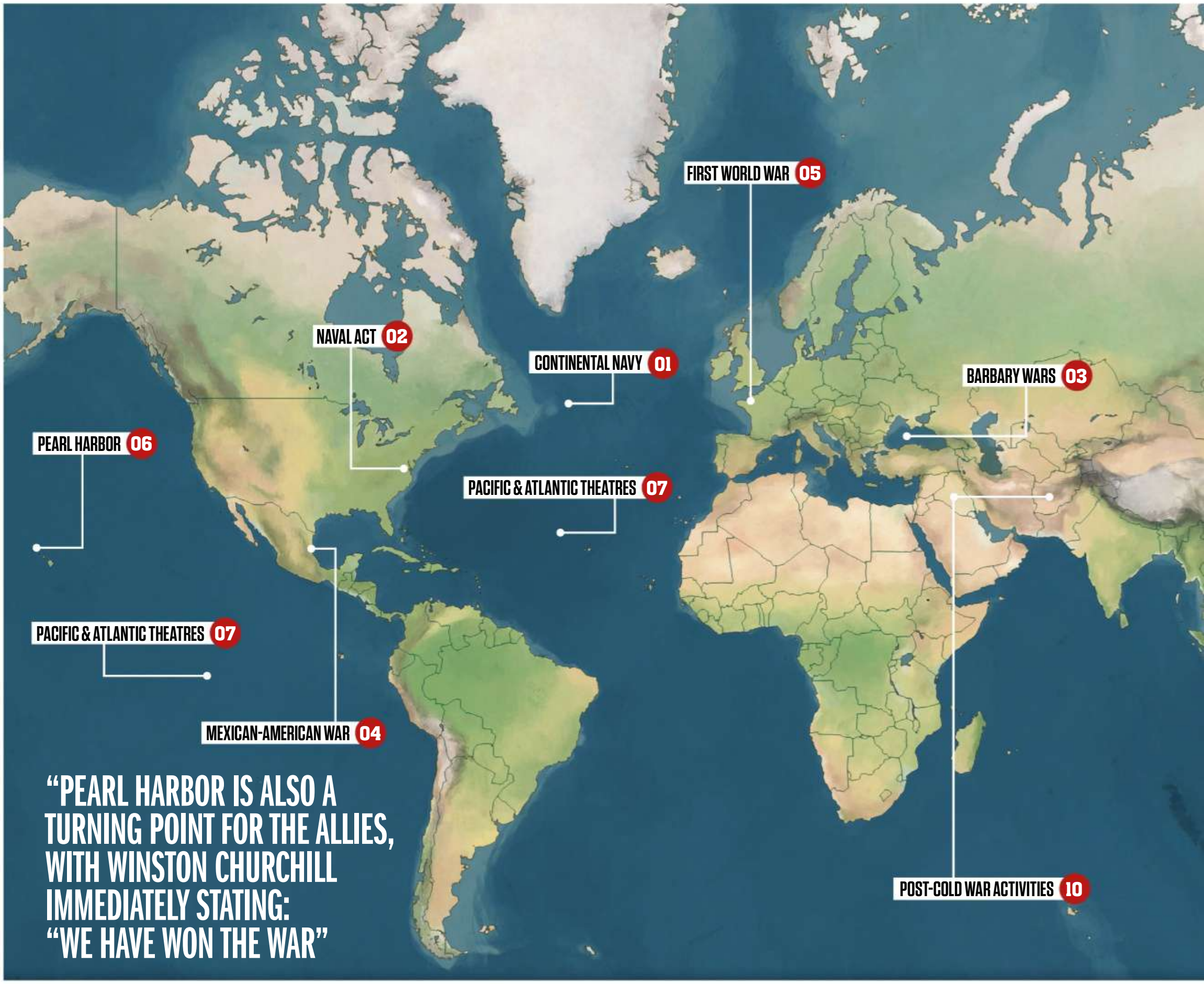
***Above:** US troops participate in the amphibious landings at Veracruz in Mexico, March 1847*

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The destruction of the battleship USS Maine in Havana Harbour contributes to the outbreak of war with Spain. The navy subsequently wins two large victories at the battles of Manila Bay and Santiago de Cuba.

Commodore George Dewey's American naval force defeats a Spanish squadron at the Battle of Manila Bay, 1 May 1898

Images © Alamy


FIRST WORLD WAR 05
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BARBARY WARS 03
PEARL HARBOR 06
PACIFIC & ATLANTIC THEATRES 07
PACIFIC & ATLANTIC THEATRES 07
MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR 04
POST-COLD WAR ACTIVITIES 10
“PEARL HARBOR IS ALSO A TURNING POINT FOR THE ALLIES, WITH WINSTON CHURCHILL IMMEDIATELY STATING: “WE HAVE WON THE WAR”

FIRST WORLD WAR 05

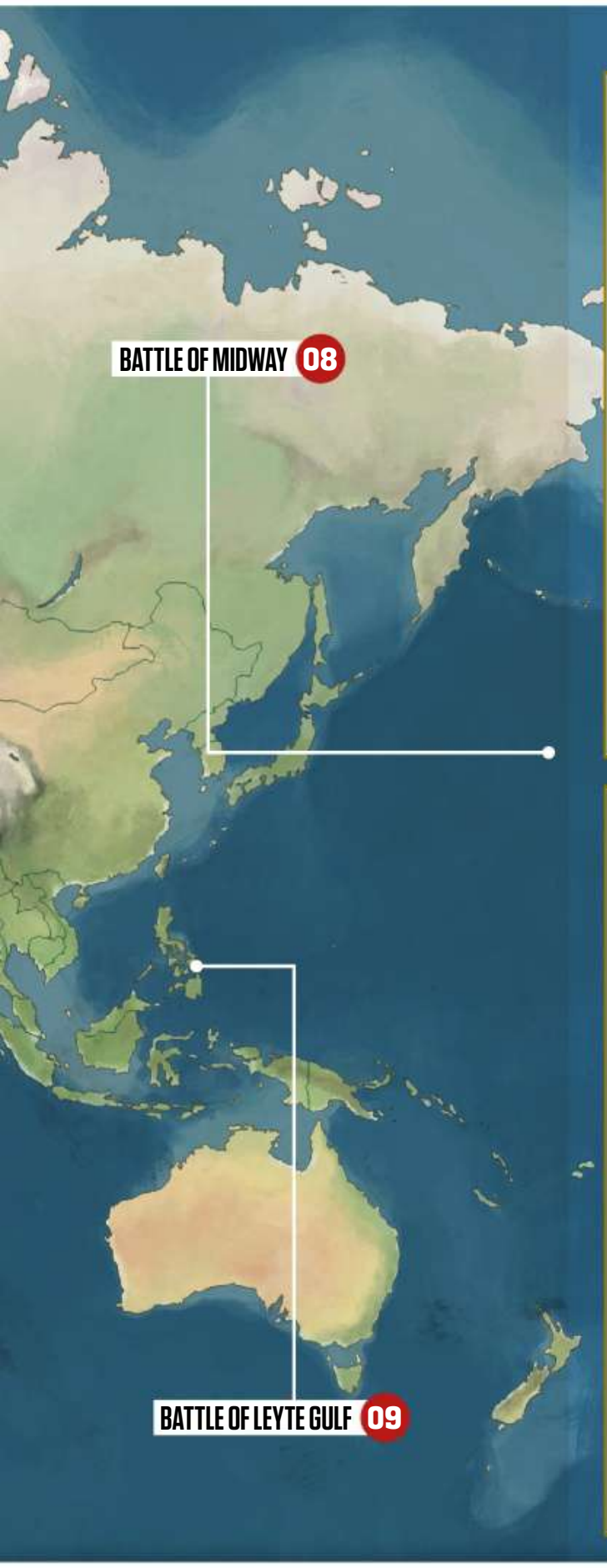
Upon entering the war, the navy’s most significant contribution is escorting and transporting two million American soldiers to France with assistance from the Royal Navy. This logistical success contributes to the Armistice and Allied victory.

USS Fanning and USS Nicholson sink German submarine U-58 and capture her crew, 17 November 1917

PEARL HARBOR 06

The Japanese attack on the US Hawaiian naval base leads to America’s formal entry into WWII. Later judged a war crime, Pearl Harbor is also a turning point for the Allies, with Winston Churchill immediately stating: “We have won the war.”

USS Shaw’s forward magazine explodes during the attack. Despite her damage, Shaw is repaired and earns 11 battle stars for actions throughout the Pacific War



POST-COLD WAR ACTIVITIES 10

The navy participates in the Gulf War and 'War on Terror' conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. It remains the most powerful navy in the world, with 296 ships and 346,200 personnel as of 2022.

Commissioned in 2016, USS Zumwalt is the world's largest and most technologically advanced destroyer

BATTLE OF MIDWAY 08

The Imperial Japanese Navy is dramatically defeated in one of the most decisive battles in naval history. The turning point of the Pacific War, the Battle of Midway marks the emergence of the US Navy as the world's dominant naval power.

Douglas TBD Devastators are prepared for launching on board USS Enterprise, 4 June 1942

COLD WAR

Now the supreme global naval power, the US Navy plays a major role in conflicts such as the Korean War, Vietnam War and Cuban Missile Crisis. It is also an important part of the United States' nuclear deterrence policy with its ballistic missile submarines.

A US Navy Patrol Boat cruises in an inlet in search of vessels carrying supplies for the Viet Cong, 22 June 1966

1941-45 — 4-7 June 1942 — 23-26 October 1944 — 1947-91 — 1991 – present

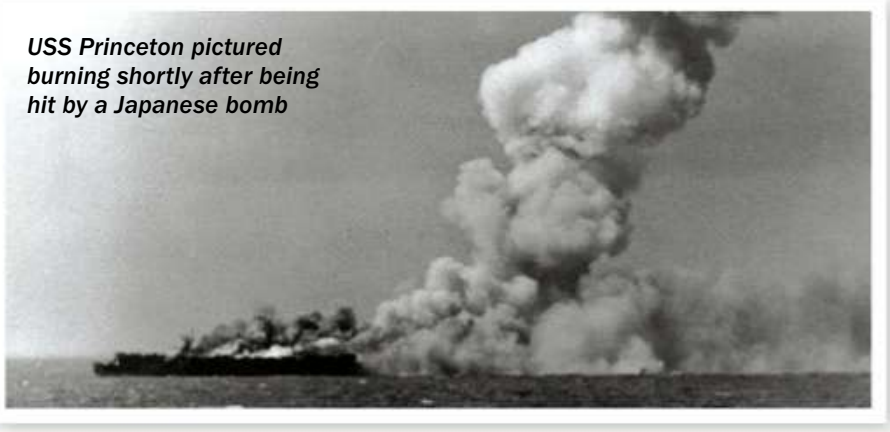
PACIFIC & ATLANTIC THEATRES 07

The navy fights on two fronts in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It is instrumental in the island-hopping campaign against the Japanese and extensively participates in the Battle of the Atlantic and Invasion of Normandy.

American casualties are loaded from Jeeps onto USS LST-134 on the Normandy coast, 12 June 1944

BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF 09

Consisting of 300 American and Australian vessels against 67 Japanese ships and involving over 200,000 personnel, Leyte Gulf is the largest naval battle in modern history. The Allied victory is also the last naval battle between battleships.



USS Princeton pictured burning shortly after being hit by a Japanese bomb

Images © Alamy, Getty

1812: TAKING ON THE ROYAL NAVY

After the American Revolution, the US Navy gained prominence while battling the king's naval forces during the War of 1812

Following the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783, the US Navy ceased to exist as a fighting force. The navy, which had consisted of relatively few warships, was disbanded for several reasons, including an inward focus for the new United States of America, difficulty achieving a consensus for a future navy among the 13 original states, and financial difficulties.

However, it soon became apparent that some form of maritime force was necessary, particularly to combat rampant smuggling to avoid import tariffs which were a primary source of revenue for the United States. As a result the Revenue Marine, the predecessor of the US Coast Guard, was created in 1790. Ten revenue cutters formed the nucleus of the Revenue Marine; however, immediate pressure from the pirates of the Barbary Coast of Africa, including the seizure of American merchant ships, compelled the US Congress to take further action.

The Naval Act of 1794 authorised the construction of six frigates, four of 44 guns and two of 36 guns. Although the Act was passed, bitter debate fuelled by diverse sectional economic interests made the process somewhat contentious. In the wake of the Congressional authorisation, the US government paid tribute to the Barbary pirates and the need for the frigates was again called into question. Eventually, three were approved for completion: United States, Constitution and Constellation.

In the years following the revolution, challenges to the sovereignty of American shipping on the high seas occurred with regularity. A brief war with France occurred in the late 1790s, and conflict with Barbary pirates persisted. However, the greatest challenge to the fledgling US Navy occurred in response to the British practice of impressing able seamen. British warships regularly stopped American merchantmen, subjecting them to search and seizure of sailors whom they alleged were actually British subjects.

The situation grew intolerable, particularly after the frigate HMS Leopard opened fire on and boarded the frigate USS Chesapeake in 1807. On 18 June 18 1812, the United States declared war on Britain.

While significant land campaigns took place during the War of 1812, much of the conflict was fought at sea. The US Navy was substantially outnumbered by the British Royal Navy, the dominant sea power in the world at the time. However, the frigate USS Constitution, under the command of Commodore Isaac Hull, shocked the British with the capture of the frigate HMS Guerriere on 19 August. Constitution followed that

Julian O Davidson's 1887 depiction of the Battle of Lake Erie, in which a US Navy flotilla defeated a smaller British force

Images © Getty

***Above:** A print showing distinguished US Navy officers around a vignette of the Battle of Lake Champlain, fought between 6-11 September 1814*

The British were stunned when the USS Constitution destroyed HMS Guerriere on 19 August 1812

"THE USS CONSTITUTION WAS NICKNAMED OLD IRONSIDES AFTER CANON SHOT BOUNCED OFF ITS STURDY OAK HULL"

victory with the sinking of the frigate HMS Java off the coast of Brazil in December. The fame of Constitution spread, boosting the morale of the American people, and the frigate gained the nickname Old Ironsides after British cannon shot were observed to bounce off its sturdy oak hull.

American frigates scored other victories against the Royal Navy, including the victory of USS United States over HMS Macedonian in October 1812, and the Constitution's victories over the smaller sloop HMS Pictou and the sixth-rate warships Cyane and Levant. The 36-gun frigate USS Essex raided for months, venturing into the South Pacific and threatening British merchant shipping and the empire's whaling fleet.

During the Battle of Lake Erie, fought on 10 September 1813, a US Navy flotilla under Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry defeated a smaller British force and ensured American control of the region for the duration of the War of 1812. Perry is remembered for transferring from his stricken flagship, the brig USS Lawrence, to the brig USS Niagara to carry on the fight.

However, the US Navy sustained serious losses during the War of 1812, as the British frigate HMS Shannon captured the frigate USS Chesapeake off Boston Harbor on 1 June 1813. Captain James Lawrence of Chesapeake was mortally wounded and uttered the famous battle cry: "Don't give up the ship!" Chesapeake was taken as a prize and sailed to Halifax, Nova Scotia. USS Essex was captured by the Royal Navy frigate HMS Phoebe and sloop Cherub in February 1814, while the frigate USS Columbia was burned to the waterline at the Washington Navy Yard that summer. The frigate USS President was taken as a prize in a one-sided confrontation with four Royal Navy warships.

During the War of 1812, numerous traditions and heroic foundational accounts of the US Navy were recorded. However, its forces were too meagre to counter the might of the British Royal Navy, which deployed sufficient assets to blockade major American ports. These blockades restricted merchant shipping, prevented warships of the US Navy from reaching the open sea, and facilitated British land campaigns against the former colonies, including the 1814 burning of the White House in Washington.

In the decades that followed the War of 1812, the US Navy received additional funding but many ship-building projects were left incomplete as the Age of Sail drew to a close. In the meantime, the US Navy again battled the Barbary states of North Africa and supported land campaigns during the Mexican War of 1846-48.

CIVIL WAR NAVIES

With the outbreak of the American Civil War, the confrontation between the US Navy and Confederate States Navy saw the transition from sail to steam and ironclad warships

A 'powder monkey' poses in front of a gun on USS New Hampshire, c.1864-65

MEN WANTED
FOR THE
NAVY!
All able-bodied men not in the employment of the Army, will be enlisted into the Navy upon application at the Naval Rendezvous, on Craven Street, next door to the Printing Office.
H. K. DAVENPORT,
Com'r. & Senior Naval Officer.
New Berne, N. C.,
Nov. 2d, 1863.

With the outbreak of the American Civil War in April 1861, the US Navy, like the Army and the government of the nation itself, was torn between allegiances to the North and South. By the end of 1861, nearly 400 officers and sailors of the US Navy had left its service to join the upstart Confederate States Navy.

In the opening days of the conflict, US sailors burned and abandoned some vessels that were likely to fall into the hands of the Confederates. However, such tactical action did not materially affect the strategic decision of the US military, chiefly advocated by General Winfield Scott, to employ the Anaconda Plan. The strategy involved conducting assertive campaigns on land against the Confederate armies, while the US Navy executed a tight blockade of Confederate ports from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico, restricting trade with European powers. The US Navy further prosecuted an aggressive effort to contain privateers and blockade runners that attempted to sneak past the warships guarding harbour entrances to bring goods to the Confederacy. US Navy warships also pursued Confederate raiders that menaced merchant shipping around the globe.

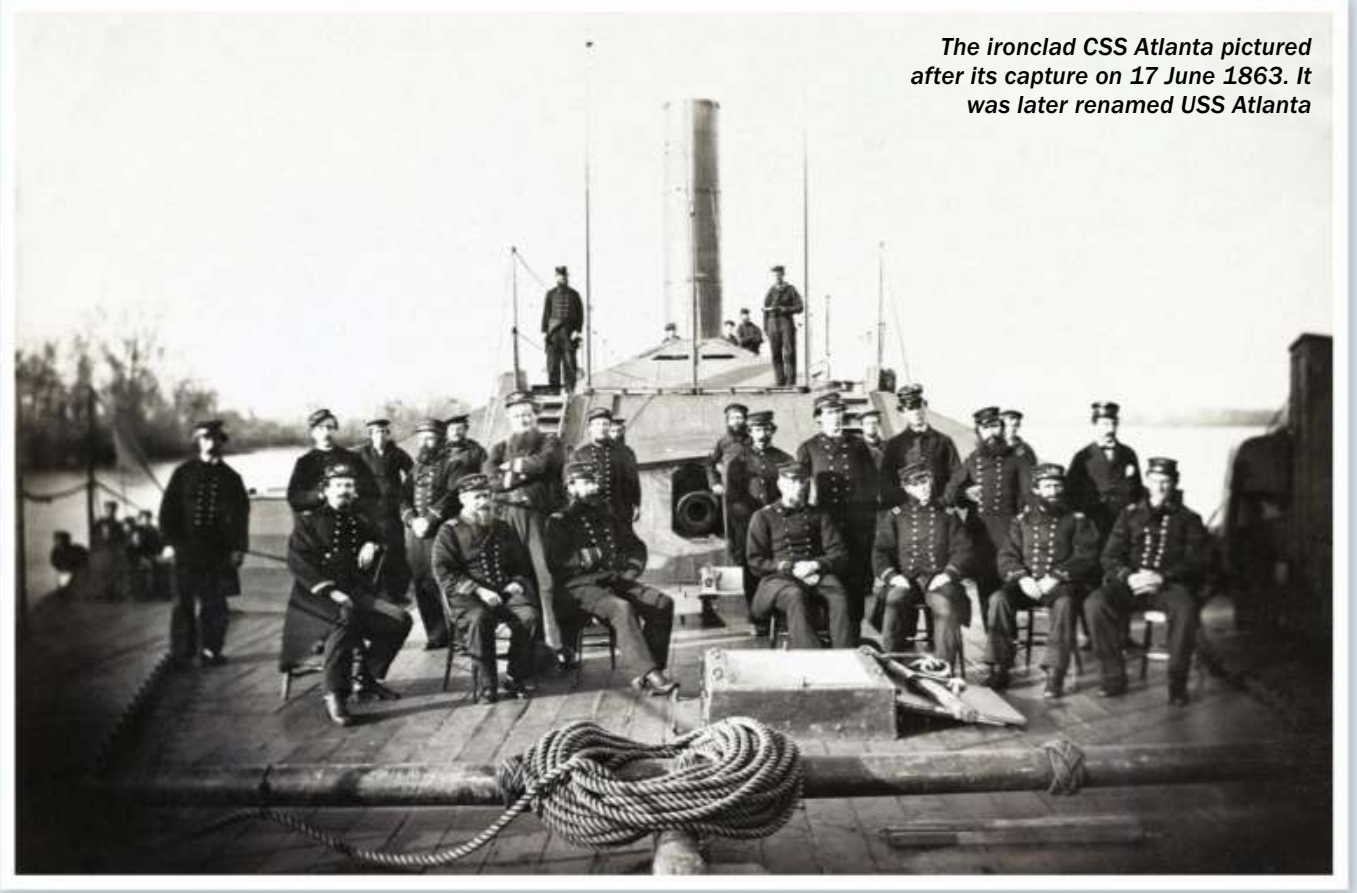
The Civil War was a proving ground for the advent of the iron and steam warship, and the US Navy of the period was in many ways a hybrid of both modern and sailing ships. During the historic Battle of Hampton Roads in March 1862, the ironclads USS Monitor and CSS Virginia (formerly the US Navy ship Merrimack) fought to a draw in the world's first battle of iron ships. Nevertheless, the Virginia did manage to sink frigates USS Congress and USS Cumberland of the fleet that blockaded the entrance to the harbour of Norfolk.

In support of a land offensive to gain control of the Mississippi River, US ironclads and gunboats of the Western Gunboat Flotilla, under the command of Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote, shelled Confederate earthworks and fortifications at Island No. 10 in the Kentucky Bend of the great Mississippi River in the spring of 1862, while Admiral David Farragut led a flotilla of US Navy warships that defeated the Confederates at New Orleans.

Farragut's ships ran the gauntlet of Confederate fire from forts near the mouth of the Mississippi, and his bold action helped Union land forces secure the largest city in the Confederacy. Farragut's adoptive brother, Admiral David Dixon Porter, commanded a gunboat flotilla at New Orleans and served in other vital command roles in the wartime US Navy.

In June 1862, US Navy forces further defeated a small Confederate fleet in the naval Battle of Memphis. That battle is noteworthy as the last engagement in which civilians with no prior military training or experience were allowed to command vessels of the US Navy.

At the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864, Admiral Farragut, a native of the Confederate state of Tennessee, further burnished his reputation as a hero of the US Navy during the run past Fort Morgan and other rebel defences at the entrance to Mobile Bay. Aboard his flagship USS Hartford, Farragut watched the developing encounter as the ironclad CSS Tennessee chugged out of the bay to give battle. In the opening moments, the lead US Navy ironclad, Tecumseh, struck a floating mine, heeled over and sank. Early mines were known as torpedoes in those days, and when Farragut learned of the incident he bellowed: "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" Tennessee was subsequently captured during the decisive US Navy victory.



The ironclad CSS Atlanta pictured after its capture on 17 June 1863. It was later renamed USS Atlanta

"AT CHARLESTON THE CONFEDERATE SUBMARINE HL HUNLEY SANK THE US NAVY SLOOP-OF-WAR HOUSATONIC WITH AN EXPLOSIVE CHARGE ATTACHED TO A BOOM"

Confederate naval innovation led to the development of the submarine, and the most famous of these craft was the HL Hunley. It sank several times during sea trials but was recovered and ultimately ventured into the harbour of Charleston, South Carolina, to sink the US Navy sloop-of-war Housatonic on the night of 17 February 1864 with an explosive charge attached to a boom. Although the submarine attack was innovative, Hunley was also sunk during the engagement with the loss of all onboard.

***Below:** Admiral David Farragut commanded USS Hartford*

Another famous naval encounter of the Civil War occurred between the sloop-of-war USS Kearsarge, under the command of Captain John Winslow, and the Confederate sloop-of-war CSS Alabama, commanded by Captain Raphael Semmes. Alabama had prosecuted a successful campaign as a commerce raider until cornered in the harbour of Cherbourg, France, in June 1864. Kearsarge sank Alabama during a battle outside the harbour that was witnessed by many civilians who had gathered on the shore.

One of the most adventurous combat cruises of the Civil War belonged to the sailing ship CSS Shenandoah, a crossover construction example which was also powered by auxiliary steam boilers. Shenandoah sailed unchecked for more than a year, capturing and sinking 38 Union merchant and whaling ships. In November 1865, months after the war had ended, Shenandoah surrendered in the River Mersey, near Liverpool. The vessel is also credited with firing the last shot of the conflict after hailing a whaler off the Aleutian Islands in the Pacific.

During the bitter four-year Civil War, the US Navy dominated its Confederate rival; however, when hostilities ceased the size of the force declined considerably. Its number of warships was reduced by 1880, and funding dwindled as Congress devoted resources to other priorities.

Images © Alamy, Getty

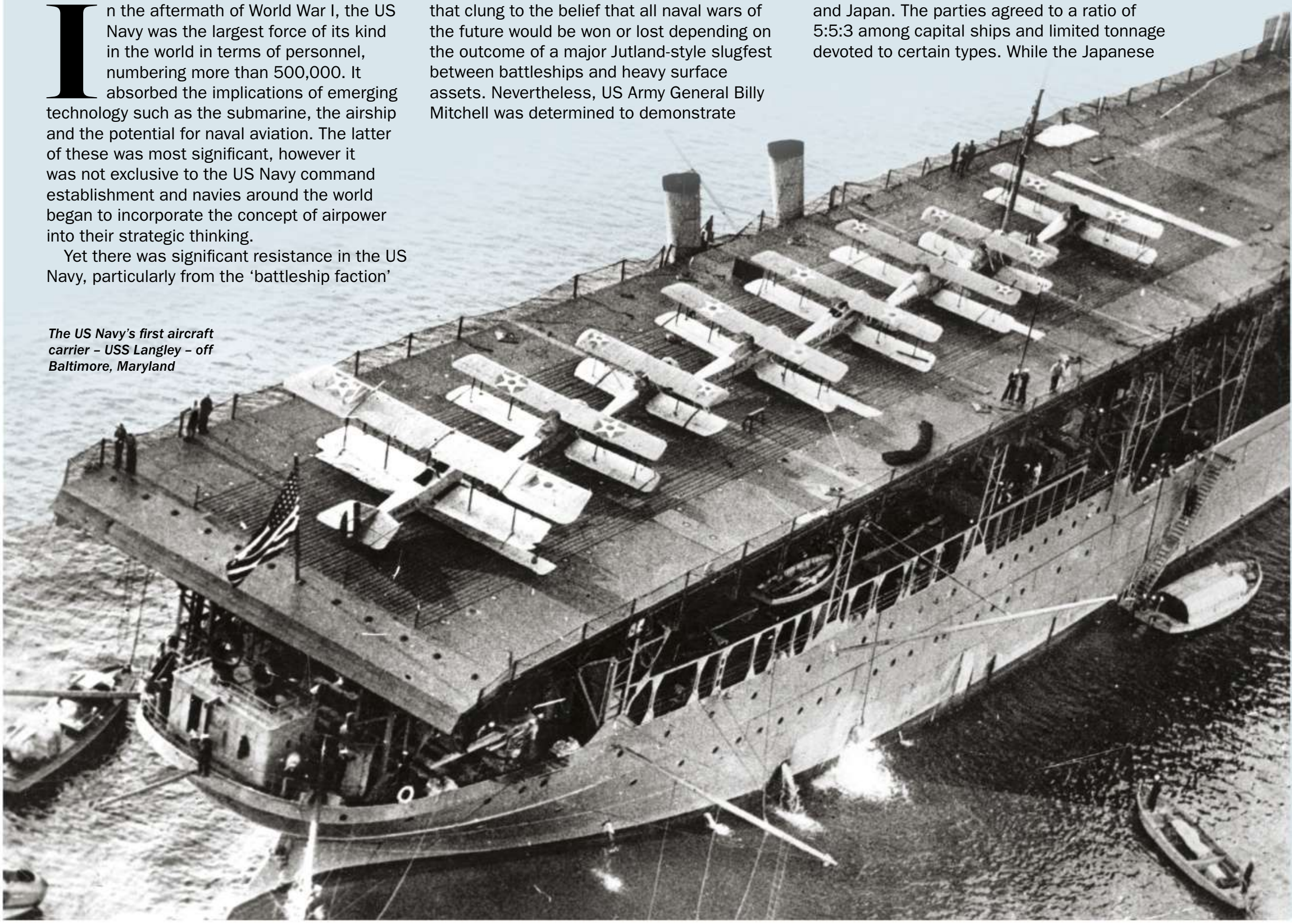
WORLD WARS: RISE OF THE CARRIER

Between the world wars the US Navy revised its strategic and tactical priorities while confronting the prospect of totalitarian aggression. The advent of naval air power would prove to be a particularly controversial issue

In the aftermath of World War I, the US Navy was the largest force of its kind in the world in terms of personnel, numbering more than 500,000. It absorbed the implications of emerging technology such as the submarine, the airship and the potential for naval aviation. The latter of these was most significant, however it was not exclusive to the US Navy command establishment and navies around the world began to incorporate the concept of airpower into their strategic thinking.

Yet there was significant resistance in the US Navy, particularly from the 'battleship faction' that clung to the belief that all naval wars of the future would be won or lost depending on the outcome of a major Jutland-style slugfest between battleships and heavy surface assets. Nevertheless, US Army General Billy Mitchell was determined to demonstrate the possibilities that aviation held for future conflicts, as well as the vulnerabilities of naval warships to bombing and torpedo attack by enemy planes. Mitchell conducted exercises to prove his theories of naval aviation, resulting in his court martial in 1925. In subsequent years and during WWII, his ideas were vindicated.

Meanwhile, following a lull in budget allocations and government support for the construction of more US Navy ships, the expansion of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Far East prompted a reexamination and larger commitment of resources to the maintenance of the US Navy. This apparent genesis of a naval 'arms race' precipitated the Washington Naval Conference of 1921, which produced a significant agreement between the governments of the United States, Great Britain and Japan. The parties agreed to a ratio of 5:5:3 among capital ships and limited tonnage devoted to certain types. While the Japanese



The US Navy's first aircraft carrier – USS Langley – off Baltimore, Maryland

***Above:** US Navy gunners instruct their British counterparts onboard a WWI-era US destroyer to be operated by the Royal Navy*

***Right:** Curious sailors observe a biplane pilot practising landing on USS Langley, October 1922*

***Below right:** Three Americans were killed when Japanese aircraft attacked the gunboat USS Panay in the Yangtze River, December 1937*

"GENERAL MITCHELL CONDUCTED EXERCISES TO PROVE HIS THEORIES OF NAVAL AVIATION, RESULTING IN HIS COURT MARTIAL"

acquiesced to the terms, which were driven by the US and British commitments to maintain global fleets, they chafed at the restrictions and later ignored them.

In 1922, the first aircraft carrier of the US Navy, the USS Langley, was commissioned. Langley was converted from an old collier, Jupiter. The aircraft carriers Lexington and Saratoga, both constructed from hulls originally intended to be battlecruisers, followed with commissioning in 1927. Still, the US Navy maintained its commitment to a strong surface fleet, including battleships and heavy and light cruisers and destroyers.

The election of Franklin D Roosevelt to the US presidency in 1932 was a watershed in the history of the modern US Navy. Roosevelt had previously served as assistant secretary of the Navy and was committed to US Navy fleet expansion, both Atlantic and Pacific. The Vinson-Trammell Act of 1934 provided for a programme of modernisation and continuing construction of naval vessels. Soon afterward, a series of US Navy-related Congressional actions acknowledged the burgeoning threat posed by the Japanese naval expansion in the Pacific with funding for further construction of new warships. The Second Vinson Act of 1937 provided for a substantial increase in the size of the US Navy, and the Two Ocean Navy Act of 1940 authorised an increase in the size of the US Navy by 70 percent, more than 250 ships.

In December 1937, the US Navy gunboat Panay was attacked and sunk by Japanese aircraft while operating on the Yangtze River in China. Three Americans were killed and 43 injured. The attack was unprovoked and occurred during the height of Japanese aggression on the Asian mainland. Panay was clearly identifiable with an American flag prominently displayed. While the Japanese apologised and offered to pay reparations, their remorse appeared hollow and served as a harbinger of future confrontation.

After WWII broke out, Roosevelt authorised the transfer of 50 World War I-vintage destroyers from the US Navy to the British Royal Navy in exchange for leases to British bases in the Western Hemisphere. The so-called 'Destroyers for Bases Deal' served as a stopgap measure as the Royal Navy battled German U-boats in the Atlantic.

The US Navy assisted the British Royal Navy in its effort to safeguard the Atlantic convoys, Britain's economic lifeline, against marauding U-boats, and engaged in an undeclared naval war with the Germans in 1941. The destroyer USS Kearny was damaged by a torpedo and the destroyer USS Reuben James sunk as Roosevelt referred to the German U-boats as "rattlesnakes of the deep".

At the same time, growing tensions with Japan precipitated the surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, plunging America and its navy into WWII.

The sinking of USS Panay by the Japanese was an ominous harbinger of future aggression

Images © Alamy, Getty

COLD WAR AND BEYOND

After World War II the US Navy declined in strength, but the coming of the Cold War demanded resources that could balance global naval power against the communist Soviet Union

USS Missouri fires towards Chongjin in an effort to cut North Korean communication lines, October 1950

***Right:** A US Navy Assault Support Patrol Boat on the Saigon River, Vietnam. Note the defoliated river bank*

F4U Corsairs returning from a combat mission over North Korea circle the USS Boxer, September 1951

Inevitably, the end of World War II signalled a significant downsizing of the US Navy, both in personnel and in the number of ships of all types. Costs were prohibitive, and the immediate need for a navy of more than 1,200 warships did not appear justifiable. Within three years, the size of the US Navy shrank to less than one-quarter of its wartime strength.

However, the emergence of the Cold War and a commitment by the communist Soviet Union to rival the US Navy for supremacy among the great naval powers of the world obliged the entire US military establishment to evaluate the state of readiness of the nation's armed forces. At the same time, interservice rivalry embroiled the military and civilian leadership of the nation at the dawn of the Nuclear Age.

After the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended World War II in the Pacific, the US Navy and newly created US Air Force engaged in an intense contest for supremacy, including the allocation of funds and control of the primary arm of strategic military strength in the midst of nuclear proliferation and the deteriorating relations between East and West. In 1949, the inter-service squabble erupted in the 'Revolt of the Admirals'. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal was fired by President Harry S Truman, and a debate raged in regard to funding of a new 'super' aircraft carrier, USS United States, and four others in its proposed class.

The carrier construction programme was cancelled, and as a result of the disagreement the US Air Force gained priority in the theory of strategic bombing with its ability to deliver atomic weapons with long-range aircraft. The US Navy was threatened with the loss of aviation in its affiliated US Marine Corps, but that setback was averted.

While the Soviet Union embarked on a tremendous naval construction programme, the US Navy maintained a significant edge in the projection of naval power across the globe via its contingent of aircraft carriers. The Soviets chose not to challenge the US Navy in terms of carriers, but by other means the Soviet Navy eventually outnumbered US surface ships and submarines at one time.

Meanwhile, the US Navy deployed in strength for the first time since World War II during the Korean War of 1950-53. Aircraft carriers stood off the Korean peninsula and launched bomber and fighter missions to interdict North Korean supply lines and degrade infrastructure as well as in support of ground forces. In the mid-1950s, Congress authorised increased naval expenditures, including the construction of eight submarines indicative of a revolutionary type capable of carrying guided missiles.

Additionally, the 1950s saw the emergence of the modern nuclear US Navy. Admiral Hyman Rickover, remembered as the father of the nuclear navy, advocated nuclear power as a means of propulsion for many US Navy warships, including a new generation of aircraft carriers, the Nimitz class. Rickover was also a key proponent of the development of the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. These submarines became a critical element in the doctrine of nuclear deterrence against the Soviet threat. Not only were the submarines capable of delivering nuclear missiles, but they were also mobile, while land-based ballistic missiles were generally located in fixed silos.

Amid this ongoing reevaluation and redesign of its capabilities, the US Navy was called to action during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. President John F Kennedy ordered a blockade of the communist island just 145km off the coast of the United States to prevent the delivery of Soviet-made intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Euphemistically referred to as a 'quarantine', this measure was effective along with other tactics in compelling the Soviets to back away from the brink of nuclear war.

Later in the 1960s, the US Navy warships plied the waters off Vietnam. At the height of the Vietnam War, its carriers launched thousands of tactical airstrikes against North Vietnamese infrastructure and supply lines from a location dubbed Yankee Station. The Brown Water Navy, consisting mostly of heavily armed monitors, patrolled inland waterways such as the delta of the River Mekong. Meanwhile, US Navy and Soviet Navy ships and submarines engaged in assessments of their adversary's capabilities: nuclear submarines played underwater games of cat-and-mouse, while surface ships sometimes had close calls, narrowly averting collisions.

As the war in Vietnam waned, the US Navy again experienced a pronounced contraction. The number of surface ships and submarines declined drastically during the 1970s, and the Soviet Navy eclipsed the US Navy in size. By the early 1980s, however, President Ronald Reagan announced the commitment of his administration to a US Navy of 600 warships with funding for modernisation and the continuing development of new weaponry.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the US Navy has continued to fulfill global obligations and serve as a primary means of projecting US military strength, particularly in the enforcement of freedom of navigation laws.

"US NAVY CARRIERS LAUNCHED THOUSANDS OF TACTICAL STRIKES AGAINST NORTH VIETNAMESE INFRASTRUCTURE"

An A-1 Skyraider prepares to take off from the aircraft carrier USS Coral Sea

Images © Alamy, Getty

THE RAJ IN WWI

INDIAN CORPS

In 1914 the Meerut and Lahore Divisions were thrown onto the Western Front to save the BEF and hold the line

WORDS **DR ROBERT LYMAN**

In the first three months of the Great War the dramatic impact of massed European armies smashing into each other across the rolling grainfields of Picardy, Artois and Flanders forced the combatant nations to face the harsh new realities of modern, machine-driven warfare. It quickly became apparent the devastating affect artillery, machine guns and rifle fire had on massed and unprotected infantry and cavalry.

The British Expeditionary Force (BEF), sent to the continent to support the much larger French Army in its attempt to prevent the Germans breaking through to Paris, was well-trained and professional — but it was small. The first battles of the Great War were shocking in their intensity and scale, and Britain soon realised that if fighting continued on this trajectory it would quickly run out of men, ammunition, artillery and the equipment. These were all badly needed in order to fight beyond a few months, especially as it appeared that the war end by Christmas.

The initial German attack into France was halted by the 'Miracle on the Marne' (7 August – 13 September) following the desperate retreat of the BEF from Mons on 23 August. The German armies then attempted to swing right, advancing behind the French block, to break out into open, undefended ground to the north. The French and the BEF (comprising a mere five divisions at the time) countered these moves at the First Battle of the Aisne (13-28 September), but German outflanking attacks through to 19 October, progressively moving north towards the English Channel, seriously stretched and exhausted the Anglo-French defenders. By now, with the route around the northern flank of the Allied armies finally closed, a defensive line of sorts had been created, but it was weak, poorly defended and had lots of gaps.

There simply weren't enough troops to cover every inch of ground. It was through this that the Germans attacked at the Battle of the Yser River during the last two weeks of October 1914 and the First Battle of Ypres from 19 October to 22 November. At Ypres and La Bassée the BEF defence held off the Germans, but only just. It was desperately clear that reinforcements were needed and it was the Indian Corps, arriving just when it was required, that stepped into the breach.

The role of the Indian Corps, which until late September was described as the Indian Expeditionary Force (A) (the IEFA), has historically been ignored, misunderstood or even grievously misrepresented. Yet it was very significant at the time for Britain and its ability to help stem the tide of the German advance into France. It was also very important in respect of India's

Main image: *Forward scouts of the 9th Hodson's Horse, an Indian cavalry regiment, near Vraignes, France*

Inset, top: *Indian gunners man a Hotchkiss machine gun in a trench*

Inset, bottom: *Photography of Garhwal riflemen taken by H.D. Girdwood near Estaire La Bassée Road, France, August 1915*

All images © Alamy, Getty

Indian troops serving with the British Army pray outside the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking, Surrey, c.1916

Bengal Lancers in London, 1914

experience of a modernity forced upon it by the shock of war. From this experience the Indian Army was modernised and restructured in 1922, and the basis of its policy of recruiting solely from the 'martial races' radically reformed. More subtle changes also resulted from the Indian Army's experience of global war, not least in moves to 'Indianise' the officer base of the army.

The Indian Corps was to remain in Flanders until the end of 1915, having contributed very significantly to saving the BEF, filling a desperately needed hole in British battle resources at a time when there were no others available. In 1915, a third of all 'British' troops in France were Indian. The Indian Corps fought bravely and brilliantly, and by doing so saved the BEF's bacon when there was a very high chance of it failing entirely. Without the contribution of the Indian Corps, as the historian George Morton-Jack asserts, the BEF could "have suffered a disastrous defeat". Against terrible odds, with almost non-existent training, the two Indian divisions of the Indian Corps – the 3rd Meerut and the 7th Lahore – suffered heavy casualties and deep privations in order to prevent the Germans breaking through the Allied line. And hold, it did. Tragically, their contribution to this key part of the Great War story is poorly remembered, both in Britain and India.

At the outset of war the two divisions, accompanied by the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade, were sent to Europe. They landed in Marseille on 26 September 1914, the Lahore having dropped off a brigade in Suez to guard the canal. At the start the IEFA boasted a total of 20 infantry battalions together with divisional troops, totalling 24,000 trained men. They were rushed north to fill gaps in the 21km line forward of Ypres, joining Lieutenant General Douglas Haig's First Army. Numbers grew rapidly in the following months. By the end of 1914, 68 infantry battalions, 204 field guns and 21 cavalry regiments had arrived. In total the Indian Corps grew to 45,000 men (28,500 Indian and 16,500 British).

Indian troops were exceptionally well-trained, hardy and professional. But they arrived in France without clothing suitable for a European winter, sufficient machine guns, mortars or artillery (Indian divisions carried only 30 horse-drawn 13-pounder field guns compared to 76 in a British), medical or signalling equipment. Likewise, Indian soldiers were still equipped with the obsolete Lee-Metford rifle, and were issued on arrival at Marseilles with the Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE).

"FIGHTING WAS IMMEDIATE, SHOCKING AND BRUTAL, BUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE OTHERWISE UNPREPARED UNITS WAS OUTSTANDING"

Within two weeks of arrival, equipped with new rifles but with very little artillery, no barbed wire, grenades or mortars and only two Vickers machine guns per battalion, the first two Indian battalions – the 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis and the 57th (Wilde's Rifles) – were thrust into the line at Ypres on 21 October. There was no time to prepare them for battle. The 84 exhausted and desperately weakened battalions of the BEF – most down to a third of their pre-Mons strength – could not be guaranteed to hold the porous line against heavy German probes. The BEF held about one-tenth of the Allied line, and the 21km of the Indian Corps held about a third of the total BEF line until reinforcements began arriving in 1915. The country was flat and low-lying, and just above the water table, making trench digging difficult.

Fighting was immediate, shocking and brutal, but the performance of these otherwise unprepared units was outstanding. On 31 October the Germans made a concerted attempt to break through against a company of the Baluchis at Hollebeke, heavily bombarding the Indians with artillery for which they had no reply. The only surviving officer, Lieutenant HV Lewis, took command:

"The trenches in the salient were being very heavily bombarded: many were obliterated. Captain Dill with his machine-guns and most of his men were, however, still in action. I brought up two platoons... but could not find a yard of trench for them to occupy... The men lay down in the open near the farm… in which were some men of the machine-gun sections filling belts. The farm was cut in half by a shell and caught fire and the occupants burnt before our eyes. Wounded were numerous and as, owing to casualties, stretchers had not arrived I ran back to fetch some. Coming

***Below:** General Jan Smuts and the Raja of Bikaner inspecting the City Volunteer Guard at the Guildhall, London, May 1917*

***Right, top:** Indian Corps headquarters, pictured near Merville, France, 31 July 1915*

***Right, bottom:** Bengal Lancers pictured at their camp in London, c.1916*

***Left:** A wounded Indian officer with a German officer's helmet that he captured at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle*

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up again… I saw English, Indian and German troops together coming out from the salient… Each man extricated himself as best he could from the mêlée and fell back on a position 600 yards behind."

The machine guns did a good deal of killing before the crews were themselves overrun and killed. Sepoy Khudadad Khan, a Punjabi Mussulman wounded and left for dead, made his way back to the battalion that night. He was awarded the first Indian Victoria Cross of the war. A Dogra company in the 57th Rifles in trenches near Messines on 31 October was killed to a man — the last soldier alive, Jemadar Kapur Singh, stood up before the advancing Germans and shot himself with his last round.

The 57th started with 740 men (11 British and 729 Indian) and finished the three-day battle with 279 (five British and 274 Indian), a loss of 62 per cent. Likewise, the 129th Baluchis arrived in Marseilles with a complement of 818 (nine British and 809 Indian). Within six months all but a tiny handful of this battalion had become casualties. By the end of 1914 the Meerut and Lahore divisions had suffered 9,779 casualties.

According to historian David Omissi, the average Indian battalion was 764 men strong when it landed in France, but by the beginning of November 1914 (after no more than two weeks of fighting) this had fallen to 550, a loss of nearly 30 per cent.

By the end of November 1914 GHQ concluded that the stretch of the front held by the Indian Corps would hold. The men used the opportunity, as trenches were being dug and positions consolidated, to dominate the German units opposite their positions. The

***Above:** This wounded officer, Bhaz Gul of the 59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force), was promoted in the field for gallantry at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle*

Indian skill at musketry was recognised by friend and foe alike. They launched patrols against the German lines at night and stalked them by day, using skills honed on the north-west frontier.

One such raid was undertaken by two battalions of the 39th Garhwal Regiment in the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division. Starting out at 3am on 10 November 1914 the men slipped undetected across the 55 metres of no-man's land, probably in their stockinged feet. The Garhwalis then silently attacked the left flank of the German trench and captured 105 Germans, two machine guns and a trench mortar. A letter by a German soldier published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* described the savage fighting:

"Today for the first time we had to fight against the Indians and the devil knows those brown rascals are not to be underrated. At first we spoke with contempt of the Indians. Today we learned to look on them in a different light – the devil knows what the English had put into those fellows. With a fearful shouting thousands of those brown forms rushed upon us. At a hundred metres we opened a destructive fire, which mowed down hundreds but in spite of that the others advanced… in no time they were in our trenches and truly those brown enemies were not to be despised. With butt ends, bayonets, swords and daggers we fought each other and we had bitter hard work."

The defensive bravery shown at the First Battle of Ypres (19 October to 30 November 1914) was followed by an offensive at Givenchy between 18 and 22 December which failed horribly, and left many shaken. An attack by four brigades of the Lahore Division successfully captured two German trenches but a fast and aggressive counter-attack threw them back. The Germans then followed up with a successful attack the next day. The Indian trenches were waterlogged and in a poor state and part of the town was captured until repulsed by two British battalions brought up to counter-attack. The Lahore Division was withdrawn from the line for a rest.

The sacrifice of the Indian Corps at the First Battle of Ypres was widely recognised in Britain at the time, and money was raised for the comfort of the sepoys and the care of the wounded. Within a month £167,000 had been raised, the equivalent of over £22 million today. From this largess came the 500-bed Lady Hardinge Hospital at Brockenhurst, Hampshire. This was one of seven hospitals dedicated in England to the treatment and rehabilitation of Indian soldiers, the most famous being the Kitchener Indian Hospital in Brighton.

A bombing party of the Indian Corps near Saint-Floris, France

BATTALIONS OF THE RAJ

When the British Empire called, thousands distinguished themselves in the killing fields of Flanders and beyond

47TH SIKHS
(IN 1922 BECAME THE 5TH BATTALION 11TH SIKH REGIMENT)

The 47th Sikhs were mobilised at Jullundur in the Punjab on 17 August 1914, with 84 reservists joining the regiment. The regiment, originally raised at Sialkot in 1901, comprised eight companies of Jat Sikhs.

Part of the 8th Jullundur Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Lahore Division, the regiment travelled by train via Hyderabad to Karachi, where it embarked on the SS Akbar for France. Cholera was discovered in one of the carriages, which meant that the entire battalion was quarantined and delayed for a week. It found itself in front of Ypres in late October 1914. The situation was confusing, as the BEF attempted to shake itself out, and the newly arriving Indian units were thrown into action as they arrived.

On 26 October, just forward of Neuve Chapelle, the 47th Sikhs were ordered to counter-attack the Germans who'd captured part of a British position. A spirited assault, without artillery, over 180 metres of open ground in the face of enemy artillery and machine gun fire, succeeded at the cost of seven killed and 28 wounded. The company commander, Major Browne, was wounded immediately and his place was assumed by Subadar Thakur Sigh, who was awarded a Military Cross.

2ND BATTALION 3RD QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES
(NO CHANGE IN 1922)

The 2nd Battalion served as part of the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division, being thrown into action in late October, fighting through the defence of Festubert in November and Givenchy in December. It was on Christmas day 1914 that a famous fraternisation (but without footballs!) took place. Captain Bagot-Chester described what happened:

"One German from his trench raised the butt of his rifle. No fire from our side. He then put his helmet on the butt. No fire. He then commenced to climb out of the trench. Still no fire from our side. So he began to advance towards the 2/39th Garhwali trenches, carrying a bottle of beer in one hand and a box of cigarettes in the other. One from our side went out to meet him and he pointed to the dead lying about. The first arrivals were followed by others from each side until there was quite a collection of Germans, or rather Saxons, and Garhwalis in No Man's Land. The burial of the dead proceeded, meanwhile the remainder fraternised, each giving the other cigarettes etc. After this had been going on for some time the 39th thought the informal armistice had lasted long enough, so they fired two shots in the air, whereupon the Germans retired and fired a shot and the armistice ended. Some of the Garhwalis went into the Hun trench and said they were very comfortable, with Christmas trees burning with candles."

57TH WILDE'S RIFLES
(IN 1922 BECAME 4TH BATTALION (WILDE'S) 13TH FRONTIER FORCE RIFLES)

The 57th were stationed at Ferozepore at the outbreak of war and went to France as part of the Lahore Division, embarking on SS Testa on 25 August. Wilde's had two companies of Sikhs, two of Dogras (from Kashmir), two of Punjabi Muslims and two of Pathans.

By 22 October the unit had reached Wytschaete, a village 8km south of Ypres, where it was soon engaged in fierce fighting. On 31 October 1914 the Germans attacked the regiment with nine battalions. One account of the battle states: "Havildar Ganga, a famous gymnast, killed five Germans and, when his bayonet broke, snatched up a German officer's sword and went on fighting. When the trench was retaken in a counter-attack, he was still alive, with six wounds." By 5 November 1914 the regiment had lost nearly half its strength and was reduced to two composite companies.

During a mustard gas attack at Ypres on 24 April 1915, some men of the Ferozepore Brigade began to run from the greyish-yellow cloud slowly advancing towards them. Jemadar Mir Dast stopped the rot: "Pulling and pushing, cursing and cajoling, he made the runaways halt and the more lightly gassed stand and fight." He was awarded a Victoria Cross from King George V at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton.

Sikh troops in France look on as one of their comrade operates a machine gun

"THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD PROCEEDED, MEANWHILE THE REMAINDER FRATERNISED, EACH GIVING THE OTHER CIGARETTES"

British and Indian officers of the 57th Wilde's Rifles at Estaires La Bassée Road

Gurkhas on the march somewhere near Merville, 1915

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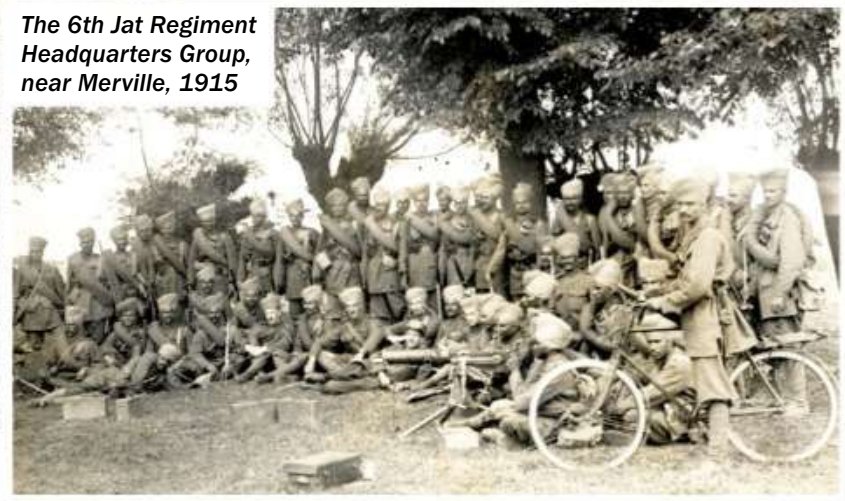
Gurkhas at a kit inspection in Le Sart, France

39th Garhwali Riflemen on the march at Estaire La Bassée Road

Indian soldiers serving in France speak to a crowd of curious children, c.1915



The 6th Jat Regiment Headquarters Group, near Merville, 1915

Nevertheless morale was very carefully watched, not least by censoring letters home. They revealed something of the shock the intensity of fighting at Ypres and Givenchy had on the troops. Historians David Omissi and Gajendra Singh have, among others, undertaken evaluations of the correspondence. A letter from a sepoy in the 39th Garhwalis admitted: "It is very hard to endure the bombs… It will be difficult for anyone to survive and come back safe and sound from the war… The bullets and cannon-balls come down like snow." Another, who warned members of his family not to join up, wrote from his hospital bed in England:

"When we attack, they direct a terrific fire on us – thousands of men die daily. It looks as if not a single man can remain alive on either side – then, when none is left, there will be peace. When the Germans attack they are killed in the same way. For us men it is a bad state of affairs here… [T]hose who return from the battlefield… are slightly wounded. No one is carried off. Even Sahibs are not lifted away. The battlefield resounds with cries."

Not all British observers were enthusiastic supporters of the sepoys in France, and accusations of poor battlefield performance still find their way to the surface, some starting with the rout at Givenchy and others from a whispering campaign against the Indian Corps, emanating probably from Haig's First Army HQ, suggesting that the vast proportion of Indian injuries were self-inflicted. A secret medical report at the time dismissed this as nonsense, but ugly rumours have a habit of sticking, despite evidence that refutes them. Instances of self-wounding were unlikely

"NO ONE IS CARRIED OFF. EVEN SAHIBS ARE NOT LIFTED AWAY. THE BATTLEFIELD RESOUNDS WITH CRIES"

to have been less or greater than in other armies, although it does seem clear that for a short period of time self-inflicted wounds were a problem.

It's hard to identify a reason for this anti-Indian sentiment. Historian Gordon Corrigan records the regimental history of a British unit, for example, far from where the Indians were fighting, claiming that the Indians refused to fight. It is true that there were a tiny number of desertions recorded from Indian ranks. A recent study suggests that these were caused by war weariness, extreme stress and homesickness. Jealousy no doubt played a part in these calumnies, as did racism. What is clear, however, is that there is no evidence whatsoever for poor battlefield performance by the Indian Corps, even when, in 1915, the battlefield circumstances would have placed unbearable stress on even the most professional and disciplined units of the BEF. Man for man, unit for unit, the soldiers of the Indian Corps, thrust into the furnace of battle in 1914 and 1915, did as well as, if not better than, any other combatants who found themselves struggling in the mud, blood and fury of battle in Flanders.

The Indian Corps was to remain an essential part of the order of battle of the BEF through that first terrible winter, fighting in the Battle of Neuve-Chapelle (10-12 March 1915); the Second Battle of Ypres (April); and the Battles of Aubers Ridge (9 May), Festubert (15-25 May) and Loos (25 September – 15 October). It had provided much-needed substance to a weakened BEF at the First Battle of Ypres, and remained in the line for the year which followed. In the fighting over that first year the Indian Corps sustained 22,000 casualties (8,000 dead and 14,000 wounded). In late October 1915 a decision was made, now that reinforcements from Kitchener's call to arms in Britain was having its effect, to redeploy the Lahore and Meerut Divisions to Mesopotamia.

This wasn't the end of the Indian contribution to the BEF, however. About 7,000 men of two cavalry divisions remained in France as part of the BEF's Cavalry Corps until they departed for Egypt in March 1918 to take part in General Sir Edmund Allenby's campaign in Palestine.

The final words need to go to the commander of the Indian Corps, General Sir James Willcocks, who reminded his fellow countrymen in 1917 of the debt they owed to their Indian brethren:

"[T]he Indian soldiers are due a great debt of gratitude by the people [of Britain], because at a time when our own countrymen were fighting against enormous odds and performing deeds of deathless glory, the Indian Corps was able to step in and fill the gap, and thus help roll… [back]… the billows thundering against that thin but still unshatterable granite wall… [T]hey arrived at the very nick of time and took their place in the sadly reduced battle line, thus relieving the strain which was becoming nigh intolerable for our own brave men."

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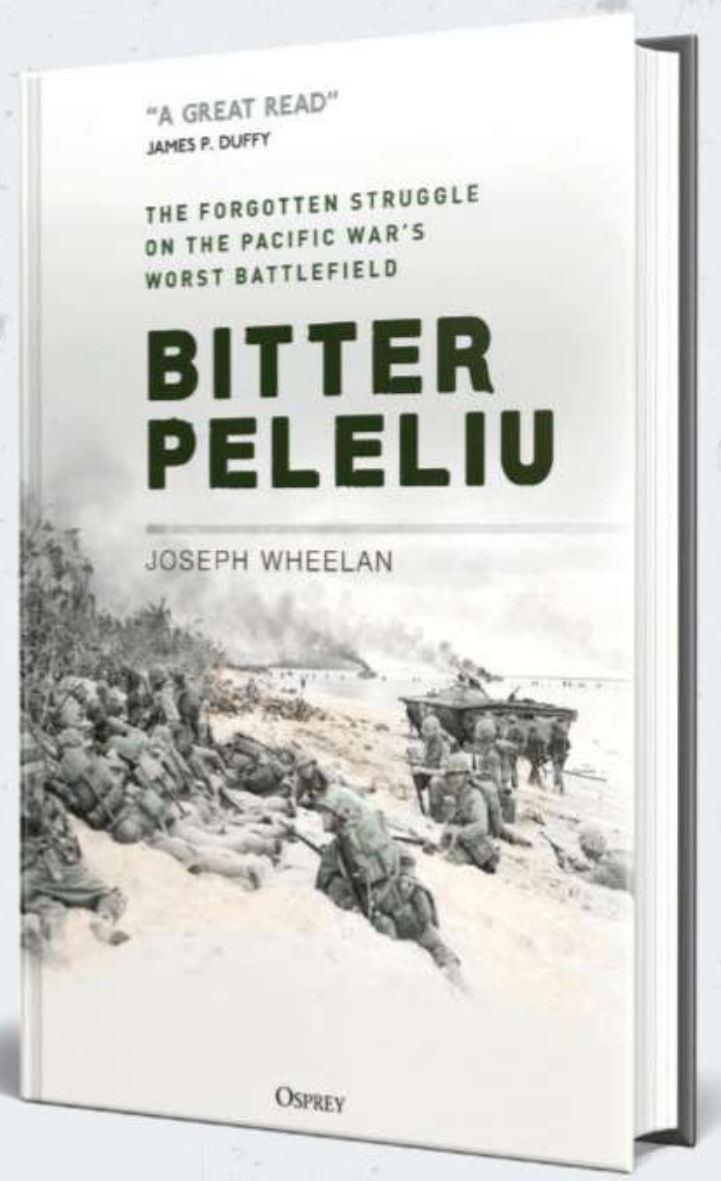
"The months-long struggle for Peleliu was one of the hardest fought campaigns of the Pacific War. It should be better known and now, thanks to Joseph Wheelan's exhaustively researched and beautifully and sensitively crafted study, it will take its rightful place alongside the iconic battles of Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa."

SAUL DAVID, AUTHOR OF *CRUCIBLE OF HELL*



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TROUBLED WATERS
ORIGINS OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS

Since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 two Chinas — the Republic and the People's Republic— have confronted each other across a highly contested sea passage

WORDS **MIGUEL MIRANDA**

The long conflict pitting China's fledgling Communists and the ruling Nationalist government originated in 1927 and stretched into World War II when they upheld a shaky alliance against Japan. In December 1945, with the Japanese evicted from the mainland and Mao Zedong's generals able to capture Manchuria, a fake truce was arranged in the city of Chungking by the American envoy General George C Marshall that both sides agreed on.

By 1946, however, the Communists went on the offensive. Armed to the teeth and with full Soviet backing, come early 1949 the old imperial capital Peking was theirs. Seeing his own generals bogged down south of the Yangtze River, the Nationalist leader and US ally Chiang Kai-shek decided to withdraw and relocate the government on the island of Formosa (Taiwan), which Japan had colonised from 1895 until 1945 and was nominally controlled by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

The Republic of China (ROC) in its new home on Taiwan endured decades of martial law, with Kai-shek as lifelong dictator. Within a year after their victory on the mainland in October 1949 the Communists received even more aid from the Soviets and expanded the borders of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Central Asia and Tibet. On 19 October 1950 a massive PRC volunteer army fought American and United Nations troops in the Korean peninsula until the ceasefire in Panmunjom on 27 July 1953. Chairman Mao Zedong, with total faith in the strength of his military, vowed to someday conquer the Nationalists in Taiwan.

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis

Throughout the 1950s the Soviet Union supported the PRC by helping it industrialise and establish a centrally planned economy. The Korean War saw the relationship reach literal new heights as the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) became the largest and best-equipped in Asia thanks to hundreds of Soviet-made MiG-15 fighter jets and Il-28 light bombers. After the end of the war, which killed an estimated one million Chinese troops, Zedong dreamt of turning the PRC into a superpower. But achieving this meant better technology was needed from the Soviets – especially submarines and nuclear weapons – and defeating his longtime foe, Kai-shek, who ruled over Taiwan.

What became the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, in 1954, was a heavy bombardment of the Quemoy (Kinmen) and Matsu islands groups. These small outposts off the coast of Fujian Province were located mere kilometres from where the PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) massed their troops. Since 1949 both Peking and Taipei (the seat of government in Taiwan) insisted their "final conquests" would be carried out, eventually. But this was propaganda for reassuring their respective citizens of their governments' effectiveness.

Using the pretext of Washington DC's plans for a Mutual Defense Treaty with Taipei in 1954, the PLA showed off the firepower it had received from the Soviets. The army's 122mm, 130mm and 152mm howitzers almost covered every inch of the Quemoy and Matsu islands and the latter endured a severe bombardment on 3 September 1954.

But what Zedong and his inner circle could not tolerate was American resolve to defend its beleaguered ally. US Navy carrier battle groups sailed the Taiwan Strait during the drawn out confrontation. US forces avoided clashes with the PLA but the presence of the Seventh Fleet's aircraft carriers alone was a strong signal to the Chinese: attack Taiwan at your own risk. The siege of Quemoy subsided after bilateral talks between Zedong and Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who replaced the late Joseph Stalin as leader of the Soviet Union in October. Historians who revisit the First Taiwan Strait Crisis still speculate whether Zedong wanted a test of the US commitment to defending Taiwan and whether nuclear threats against China would materialise. This was a reckless move since President Dwight D Eisenhower's

***Right:** A 1958 Communist propaganda poster, depicting soldiers confronting Nationalist China (Taiwan), and the US. The caption reads "We must liberate Taiwan"*

© Getty

own generals advised using tactical nuclear weapons against mainland China if it carried out an invasion.

Sabers over the Strait

The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, in 1958, was more dangerous than its predecessor. As before, the PLA lit up Quemoy and Matsu with artillery, on 23 August 1958. But the garrisons on the islands had been reinforced with American-supplied 155mm and 203mm artillery along with ample rounds to spare. Once again, the US Navy's carriers secured the strait and the Chinese navy had no means to deter them using their own gunboats. Sailing a flotilla across the 200km of open sea between Fujian and Taiwan's western coast was a risky proposition too. If the PLA gathered approximately 200,000 troops (the maximum figure assessed by US intelligence) for an invasion they would need junks and barges to transport them, with inadequate air cover. But soon enough the Communists and Nationalists were in direct combat as their respective air forces, now operating fighter jets, tangled in the skies above the Chinese coast.

By 1958 the PLAAF counted a thousand MiG-15s in its arsenal. These agile Soviet-built fighters had proven themselves over the Korean peninsula and packed twin large-calibre guns. The Republic of China Air Force, on the other hand, received the superb F-86 Sabre that had also flown in Korea. The US supplied Taiwan with more than 300 of them, along with fighter-bombers and helicopters, as a maximal guarantee against Chinese aggression. With a better designed cockpit and superior avionics the F-86 Sabre, unlike the MiGs, carried new air-to-air missiles. In a series of dog fights the Taiwanese pilots showed their mettle and trounced the PLAAF, albeit with an unexpected outcome – at least one AIM-9B Sidewinder missile got stuck in the fuselage of an enemy aircraft and failed to detonate.

Although the PLA drew down its forces by early September, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis did not end in a formal sense. A full-scale invasion of Taiwan was no longer in the cards for the rest of Zedong's life but the siege of Quemoy and Matsu continued for the next 20 years, though never intense enough to draw the US Navy's presence, and the sound of Chinese artillery rumbled over the sea on a regular basis. The Taiwanese garrison on the islands adapted to the situation by using their closeness with the mainland as a launching point for propaganda. The gist of this silent campaign was promoting the material wealth of 'free' Taiwan over impoverished Maoist China.

China gets the bomb

On 17 October 1964 an atomic bomb was detonated a Lop Nur, a remote testing site in the Gobi Desert, and heralded China's status as a nuclear power. The fact the detonation took place just four years after a near-total breakdown in diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union was not a coincidence. The underlying causes of the Sino-Soviet Split in 1960 were the emerging polarities within the Communist Bloc – the Soviet Union had its chosen allies and satellites while China was steadfast in cultivating its own friends and proxies. Until the 1970s Peking had an active foreign policy to arm and train revolutionaries in the Third World.

Since 1954 the US Seventh Fleet has been responsible for deterring China's provocations over the strait

"PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S GENERALS ADVISED USING TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST MAINLAND CHINA IF IT INVADED"

It is well-known how the Soviets nursed China's fledgling nuclear programme in the 1950s, which blossomed in the years between the First and Second crises with Taiwan, and this was supposed to culminate in a viable nuclear triad for Peking: land-based intercontinental missiles matched with warheads delivered by air and sea. After the breakthrough at Lop Nur further tests were carried out until 1967; however, the detonation of a hydrogen bomb not only revealed the extent of Communist China's technical know-how but also its limitations. On a strategic level, having nuclear warheads on a few dozen Long March rockets ended the threat of nuclear blackmail by the US, but China could barely afford a nuclear arsenal as devastating and elaborate as those of the main Cold War adversaries.

Meanwhile, Taipei did not take the news sitting down. Many Asian countries at the time were either discussing or setting up clandestine nuclear weapons programmes, with varying levels of success. Both India and Pakistan, for example, had thriving nuclear weapons programmes in the 1970s but did not actually deploy these until 1998. North and South Korea had nuclear weapons programmes as well. In Taiwan's case, a civilian nuclear energy programme was started as early as 1956, with US assistance. By the 1970s there was growing evidence collected by the State Department of a Taiwanese enrichment programme for weapons-grade uranium as well as efforts to assemble a prototype bomb.

Above: *Chinese POWs arrive on Taiwan – some are holding the flag of the Republic of China, 1954*

Above: *During their last cordial meeting, in 1945, Chairman Mao Zedong and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek enjoyed a toast. The two represented competing authoritarian systems that wanted to rule China*

Above: *This Chinese propaganda poster from 1958 refers to the metal needed for the war effort, and depicts a vat of molten metal being poured onto Taiwan*

Since 1956 more than 110,000 Sidewinders in all variants have been manufactured by the United States

THE LOST SIDEWINDER: BUTTERFLY EFFECT?

In 1958 the aerial skirmishes over the Taiwan Strait compromised an iconic weapon system of the Cold War: the AIM-9B Sidewinder. The air-to-air missile made by Raytheon was a simple design with four canards near the seeker's glass 'eye' and four stabiliser fins around its booster. It was a short-range munition that tracked the intense thermal signatures of an enemy fighter jet's exhaust. With a diameter of 120mm and a length of 2.87 metres, a single missile carried a 9.4kg proximity fuse warhead of plastic explosive.

Yet as with all sorts of military innovations, the original Sidewinders had their shortcomings. Unfortunately, the PLAAF retrieved an intact Sidewinder after a dogfight left a dud lodged in a fighter jet, most likely a MiG-15. At the time most Western intelligence analysis agreed the Chinese military's day-to-day operations were possible because of Soviet advisors and technicians embedded in every command. The Soviets and the Chinese military-industrial complexes used the captured Sidewinder to engineer a version of their own and delivered them to their respective allies.

This became apparent once the US military became embroiled in Vietnam and air engagements with the North Vietnamese MiG-19's saw the use of new Communist Bloc air-to-air missiles. These weapons turned out to be the K-13 – a successful Sidewinder clone. Nearly all Warsaw Pact air forces and Soviet allies in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America received them. Of course, the United States did the same for their NATO allies and other regional proxies. Externally the K-13, code named Atoll, could be mistaken for a Sidewinder but other countries such as Israel and the former Yugoslavia, and later on Iran, made their own Sidewinder copies too.

After 1958 the armed forces of Taiwan embraced the Sidewinder and assembled them under licence as the Sky Sword 1, including surface-to-air (SAM) variants similar to those on the M48 Chaparral and a SAM designed for use by remote-controlled turrets on warships. At present, a Chinese state-owned enterprise is responsible for making 'Communist' Sidewinders under an alternate brand, the PL-5.

Finally, in 1988, the CIA plant and defector Colonel Chien Hsiun-yi fled to the United States and exposed the Chung Shan Institute of Science and Technology's secret research programme, which was later stopped under American pressure.

The end of Mao

When China's dictator passed away from old age on 9 September 1976 the regime he left behind was reeling from the Cultural Revolution in which many senior cadres were purged, and sometimes killed. The tense rivalry with the Soviet Union coupled with international isolation left China impoverished, despite its large industrial base. A silver lining amid this uncertainty was the improved relationship with the United States that began under President Richard Nixon. By 1978 full diplomatic relations were established between Peking and Washington DC, and the United Nations formally welcomed the PRC while invalidating the ROC's own membership. Taiwan's importance and diplomatic standing in the world suffered as a result. The Taiwan Relations Act passed by US lawmakers in 1979 did little to mitigate the damage, although it had provisions for assisting the country with self-defence.

The thaw in the US-China relationship was barely felt in the Taiwan Strait, where the ROC Navy kept zealous guard of the open waters – more importantly, the Median Line dividing the strait – and up to 30,000 troops were stationed in Quemoy and Matsu. Although there was now renewed hope that peaceful coexistence would prevail during the 1980s, as many as five million soldiers were enlisted in China's armed forces, the majority of them in the army. The PLAAF had 4,000 combat aircraft, most of them outdated J-6 and J-7 fighters, while China's three naval fleets totalled 2,000 ships and as many as 200 diesel submarines. Yet these numbers had no practical use under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, whose long tenure until 1993 was focused on opening up China to grow its economy. The US military intelligence assessed that Peking (later renamed Beijing) had neither the means nor the will for an invasion as economic growth became the national priority. This proved correct – until the situation in the strait almost spiralled out of control again.

Taiwan makes a fighter

By 15 July 1987 the martial law that had been a fixture in Taiwanese public life for four decades came to an end and democratic

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“KNOWING THAT IT MUST CONTEND WITH A COMMUNIST NEIGHBOUR WITH A HUGE MILITARY, TAIPEI HARNESSED ITS INDUSTRIAL BASE TO BUILD A STRONG MILITARY DETERRENT”

elections were held the following year. At the time Taiwan enjoyed a standard of living and overall prosperity that was superior to the mainland, which was preoccupied with reforming its economy. Ever since the Taiwan Relations Act was passed in 1979 there was a noted reluctance by the US to maintain its military commitments with the island. Knowing that it must contend with a communist neighbour with a huge military, regardless of an invasion threat, Taipei harnessed its industrial base to build a strong military deterrent outside formal American support, which had dwindled.

This marked the beginning of several localised programmes to develop high-tech weapons systems. While efforts to assemble a nuclear warhead were kept secret, the Indigenous Defense Fighter (IDF) was the opposite, having deep inputs from many US defence contractors. The irony was, as American and other Western companies helped the Taiwanese in their armaments programmes, the same companies were doing business with mainland China’s state-owned enterprises. The Chinese air force, for one, developed a fondness for US-made avionics and radars that could be installed in their outdated planes.

The IDF – also known as the F-CK-1 Ching-kuo – took its maiden flight on 28 May 1989 and was hailed as an historic achievement. After all, the bulk of the Taiwanese air force’s combat aircraft were twin-engine F-5s designed in the 1950s and there was no approval yet from Washington DC for exporting F-16s. A perplexing detail of the F-CK-1, with total production reaching 128 units by the 2000s, was its engines: these were supplied by the US and chosen because they limited the aircraft’s flight range.

The Third Straits Crisis

With Taiwan having developed into a prosperous democracy, optimism for a peaceful unification flourished, until Beijing decided on a show of force. Since 1992 the ruling Kuomintang party, which had governed Taiwan since 1949, reached an agreement with its rival on the mainland. This ‘consensus’ was to promote the idea that a single Chinese nation existed with separate political systems. Or, in the official wording of Beijing, to accept only one Chinese nation existed and to work for peaceful reunification. But in the summer of 1995 all this progress was thrown out of the window and East Asia returned to the brink.

When Taiwan’s President Lee Teng-hui wanted to visit his alma mater Cornell University in the United States this was poorly received by the

***Above:** The Chinese military established its Lop Nur Nuclear Test Base on 16 October 1959 with help from the Soviets. The base’s headquarters are at Malan, about 125km northwest of Qinggir. The first Chinese nuclear bomb test, codenamed ‘596’, was carried out at Lop Nur in 1964*

Chinese government. In their view the US was recognising a different Chinese head of state by allowing President Lee to make the trip. When he arrived in the US amid wall-to-wall media coverage the response from Beijing was furious. While no outlying Taiwanese islands came under direct attack, Beijing sent its air force and its navy on month-long drills. To further intimidate Taipei the PLA Rocket Force tested its latest ballistic missiles. These were carried by wheeled transporters and could be prepared for launch within minutes. The destabilising effect of these missiles had been established earlier in the Middle East and the same technology was flourishing in the Asia-Pacific.

In a shift from its softer stance on China since the 1970s, the US Navy sent two carrier strike groups to the Taiwan Strait as a clear signal China’s behaviour would not be tolerated. It seemed to work as Beijing kept its forces from attacking Taiwan, although over the next 25 years China and the US were drawn into serious ‘great power competition’.

America sends arms

In late 2020 the US government, through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, announced it was prepared to sell 11 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers to Taiwan along with the powerful Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) ballistic missile, which has a range exceeding 500km. The HIMARS is an air-transportable truck with an armoured cab and a pivoting launcher that contains a pod of six rockets. The rockets can be swapped for a single ATACMS missile that can carry either sub-munitions spread in mid-air over a target area or a powerful unitary warhead. The ATACMS in particular is a weapon system the Taiwanese military has never fielded before, although it possesses mobile rocket launchers such as the RT2000. The value of deploying HIMARS launchers is in long-range artillery coverage beyond the usual 20 to 25km range of most 155mm howitzers.

The announcement of the ATACMS sale followed an earlier decision to sell shore-based Harpoon missiles to help the Taiwanese military fend off either an amphibious attack or a blockade. Other US arms sales included 66 F-16V multirole fighters for the Taiwanese Air Force, whose F-CK-1s and older F-16A/Bs lagged behind China’s newest fighter jets.

This renewed effort to equip Taiwan for defending itself against invasion came as the likelihood of such an attack increased as Chinese military aircraft repeatedly encroached on Taiwan’s air defence identification zone. This was meant as retaliation for President Tsai Ing-wen’s refusal to acknowledge the 1992 consensus of “one country, two systems” that Beijing values. Her defiance of Beijing stems from her background with the Democratic Progressive Party rather than the ‘old guard’ Kuomintang that had long buried the hatchet with the Chinese Communist Party.

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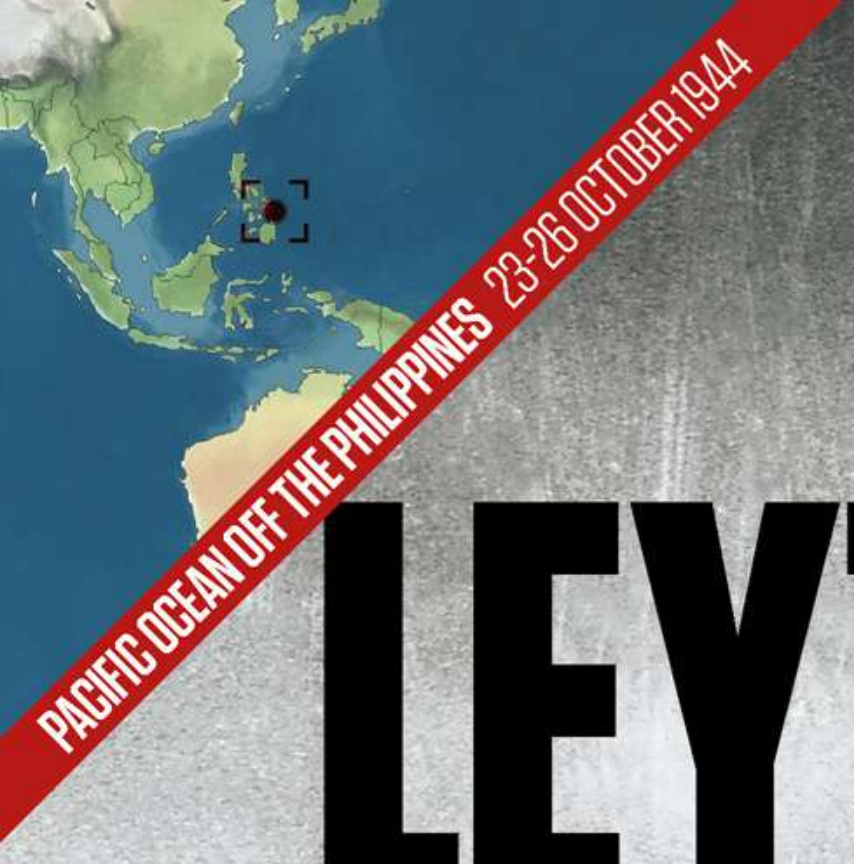

Great Battles

LEYTE GULF

In October 1944, the US Navy defeated the Imperial Japanese Navy in the epic Battle of Leyte Gulf as the Japanese sought to disrupt US landings in the Philippines

WORDS **MICHAEL E HASKEW**

The Battle of Leyte Gulf was a major naval engagement fought between October 23-26 1944 across a wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean near the Philippine Islands. One of the decisive naval battles of World War II in the Pacific, it was actually a series of engagements, collectively recognised as the largest naval battle in history. After US forces mounted an invasion of the island of Leyte, the Japanese devised a complex plan of attack, hoping to destroy the US transports and escort ships that were landing and providing logistical support to American troops.

The Leyte landings marked the return of American forces to the Philippines and their initial step in liberating the islands from Japanese occupation. The US Navy narrowly avoided catastrophe when heavy Japanese warships engaged a light screening force near the American landing beaches and managed to inflict a decisive defeat on the Imperial Japanese Navy. The Japanese attempt to disrupt the landings in the Philippines failed and the offensive capability of the Imperial Navy was seriously eroded, particularly with the loss of numerous warships and its relatively few remaining combat aircraft. After Leyte Gulf, the US Navy dominated the remainder of the naval war in the Pacific.

Background

In the summer of 1944, US commanders looked to continue their steady approach to the Japanese home islands. General Douglas MacArthur, evacuated from the Philippines more than two years earlier, convinced President Franklin D Roosevelt that the US had an obligation to the Filipino people to liberate them from Japanese occupation and had pledged “I shall return!” when he’d relocated to Australia from the islands in the spring of 1942.

For American war planners, the liberation of the Philippines would sever Japanese supply lines to occupied territories in the East Indies. In addition, it would provide bases for further offensive operations against Japan itself, and enable US naval and air assets to reduce the threat from Japanese forces on the island of Formosa (today, Taiwan) and the coastal areas of China.

In October 1944, MacArthur made good on his promise, wading ashore on the Philippine island of Leyte. As American ground troops landed on the beaches and engaged the Japanese defenders, the largest naval fight of the war developed in the waters around the Philippines. The Japanese naval high command envisioned Operation Sho-Go, an attempt to destroy the American naval support force

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OPPOSING FORCES

UNITED STATES & AUSTRALIA	VS	EMPIRE OF JAPAN
COMMANDERS		**COMMANDER**
WILLIAM HALSEY		TAKEO KURITA
THOMAS KINKAID		SHŌJI NISHIMURA
CLIFTON SPRAGUE		KIYOHIDE SHIMA
JESSE OLDENDORF		JISABURŌ OZAWA
JOHN COLLINS		YUKIO SEKI
FLEET		**FLEET**
8 FLEET CARRIERS		1 FLEET CARRIER
9 LIGHT CARRIERS		3 LIGHT CARRIERS
18 ESCORT CARRIERS		2 HYBRID CARRIER/ BATTLESHIPS
12 BATTLESHIPS		7 BATTLESHIPS
24 CRUISERS		13 HEAVY CRUISERS
116 DESTROYERS AND DESTROYER ESCORTS		6 LIGHT CRUISERS
1,500 PLANES		35+ DESTROYERS
		300+ PLANES

"GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, EVACUATED FROM THE PHILIPPINES MORE THAN TWO YEARS EARLIER, CONVINCED PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT THAT THE US HAD AN OBLIGATION TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TO LIBERATE THEM FROM JAPANESE OCCUPATION"

The USS St Louis is engulfed in flames and smoke after being hit by a Japanese kamikaze plane during the Battle of Leyte Gulf

BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

23-26 OCTOBER 1944

01 I SHALL RETURN

On 20 October 1944, General Douglas MacArthur wades ashore on the Philippine island of Leyte, fulfilling his earlier promise: "I shall return!" MacArthur further exhorts the Filipino people to rise up against the occupying Japanese.

02 DARTER AND DACE

After spotting Admiral Takeo Kurita's Center Force in the Palawan Passage on 23 October, US submarines Darter and Dace shadow the Japanese surface force and launch torpedoes, sinking two heavy cruisers and damaging a third, in the opening phase of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

03 MIGHTY MUSASHI SUNK

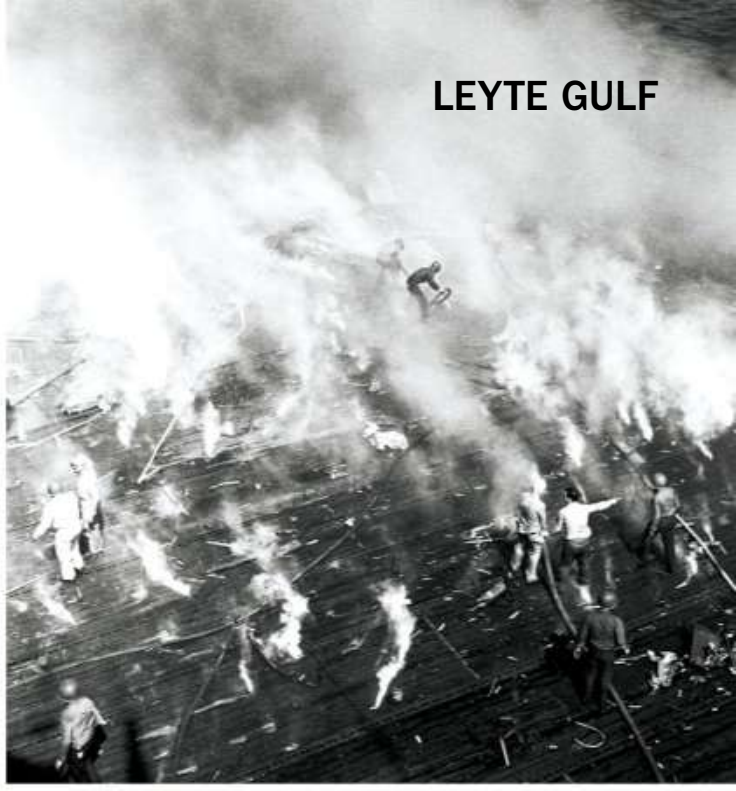
The Japanese super battleship Musashi, sortied along with sister ship Yamato as elements of Kurita's Center Force, comes under devastating air attack in the Sibuyan Sea on 24 October, and finally sinks after absorbing hits from 17 bombs and 19 torpedoes.

04 TAKING THE BAIT

Admiral William F 'Bull' Halsey, commander of the US Third Fleet, turns northward on 24-25 October, lured by Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa's Decoy Force and the prospect of a decisive battle with remaining Japanese aircraft carriers, leaving San Bernardino Strait open.

05 PEARL HARBOR REVENGE

Commanded by Admiral Jesse Oldendorf, PT-boats, destroyers, cruisers and old US Navy battleships – some damaged or raised from the mud of Pearl Harbor – devastate two Japanese task forces in the Battle of Surigao Strait on the night of 25 October.



***Above:** Firefighters onboard the USS Intrepid battle to extinguish flames on the deck of the ship*

A kamikaze plane dives towards the USS Lexington

06 RUDDER DIFFICULTIES
A Japanese destroyer, lone survivor of the decimated first task force entering Surigao Strait on 25 October, fails to warn the second task force of the US firepower waiting just ahead, signalling only: "I am Shigure; I have rudder difficulties."

07 PAGODA MASTS
As Kurita's Center Force bears down on the Leyte beaches on 25 October, an American pilot confirms for Admiral Clifton AF Sprague that the ships he sees are Japanese, identifying their "pagoda masts". Moments later, the Battle off Samar erupts.

08 THE WORLD WONDERS
Wording meant to pad an inquiry from Admiral Chester Nimitz is interpreted as a rebuke by Halsey off Cape Engaño when he reads: "...where is rpt where is task force 34 rr the world wonders" and Halsey reacts with dismay.

"...WHERE IS RPT WHERE IS TASK FORCE 34 RR THE WORLD WONDERS"

09 LINGERING LEYTE LAMENT
In the middle of a great US victory, controversy emerges as to Halsey's tactical command decisions. Debate continues regarding the series of events that led to the ordeal and triumph of Taffy 3 during the Battle off Samar.

US destroyers and escorts lay a smoke screen during the Battle off Samar, 25 October

in the Leyte area and to inflict as much damage as possible on the US Navy. In true Japanese style, Sho-Go was a complex endeavour involving a pincer movement to attack the American shipping off Leyte while also luring the fast battleships and fleet aircraft carriers under Admiral William F 'Bull' Halsey far to the north, where the bulk of the US Third Fleet would be too far away to intervene in the Japanese strike.

The success of Operation Sho-Go depended on the ability of the Northern, or Decoy Force, under Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, to entice Halsey northward from the San Bernardino Strait toward Cape Engaño (the English translation of 'Engaño' is, appropriately, 'lure' or 'hoax') in pursuit of Ozawa's aircraft carriers. These had been rendered fairly useless as offensive weapons due to a dearth of aircraft and trained pilots, after the Imperial Navy had sustained irreplaceable losses in the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944. As Halsey moved away from the Leyte invasion beaches in pursuit of Ozawa, the Japanese correctly believed that only a light screening force would remain.

The Japanese counted on Halsey taking the bait offered by Ozawa's sacrificial Northern task force. Halsey's aggressive nature and his burning desire to bring about a decisive surface engagement with his fast Iowa-class battleships, as well as the long-awaited opportunity to destroy the remaining Japanese aircraft carriers, would be too much to resist. With the threat of Halsey's firepower diminished, other Japanese naval forces would spring a devastating trap on the vulnerable American supply ships and troop transports off Leyte, guarded only by the small escort carriers, destroyers and destroyer escorts of Admiral Thomas C Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet.

To exploit the deception, three Japanese task forces would converge on the invasion area: Admiral Takeo Kurita would lead a foray with the Center Force through the Sibuyan Sea and San Bernardino Strait while Admirals Shoji Nishimura and Kiyohide Shima would command elements of the Southern Force, advancing through the Mindanao Sea and Surigao Strait. If the movements succeeded, then the Japanese warships coming together off Leyte would find themselves the 'hawk among chickens' and inflict terrible damage.

The American landings on Leyte occurred 20 October 1944, putting more than 130,000 soldiers of the US Sixth Army ashore against light resistance as the defenders chose to marshal their resources for a prolonged battle toward the interior of the island.

The Japanese naval high command responded by activating Sho-Go.

Prelude in the Sibuyan & Sulu Seas

After departing Brunei, Kurita's powerful Center Force was observed transiting the Palawan Passage by the US submarines Darter and Dace. The two subs began shadowing the Japanese and radioed information on course, speed and strength throughout 23 October. The next morning, the submarines attacked, sinking the Japanese cruisers Atago and Maya and damaging a third, Takao. Darter ran aground a short time later, and her crew was rescued by Dace.

As the day wore on, Kurita came under attack in the Sibuyan Sea by dive bombers and torpedo planes from Halsey's Third Fleet aircraft carriers, and the Center Force had no protective air cover of its own. Planes from the American carriers Lexington, Essex, Intrepid, Enterprise, Franklin and Cabot flew 259 sorties,

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

***Left:** Loading drop tanks on Curtiss Helldivers aboard USS Lexington (CV-16) before a search mission, 25 October, 1944*

and the Japanese super battleships Yamato and Musashi, behemoths mounting huge 18-inch main batteries, were large targets. Musashi was assailed by swarms of American planes and took hits from 17 bombs and 19 torpedoes before sinking. Yamato took three bombs and was down by the bow when the American planes departed.

On the same day, however, Japanese planes based in the Philippines attacked the American fleet off the island of Luzon. A single Yokosuka D4Y 'Judy' dive bomber managed to evade combat air patrol fighters and anti-aircraft fire from the US escort ships and dropped one 550lb bomb on the light carrier USS Princeton. The bomb penetrated both the flight and hangar decks before exploding and causing extensive damage while igniting fuel stores that sparked additional fires. Late in the afternoon, Princeton was wracked by an internal explosion and the light cruiser USS Birmingham, rendering assistance at the time, was heavily damaged. The effort to save Princeton proved futile and the carrier was scuttled by two torpedoes fired from the light cruiser USS Reno.

The Northern Force succeeds

Despite significant losses, Kurita retired briefly to regroup and assess the damage. Undeterred, he subsequently changed course and pressed on toward San Bernardino Strait and the Leyte invasion beaches. Meanwhile the Northern Force, under Ozawa, steamed toward Cape Engaño and a worried Halsey could not initially determine its location. His concern over carrier-based airpower was unfounded, as the Northern Force mustered only about 100 planes. Reports of Kurita's temporary retirement indicated that the Center Force was out of the battle, but that conclusion was premature. When Halsey was alerted to its location on 24 October, he set off in hot pursuit, ordering every available US carrier and fast battleship to join the hunt.

Halsey dashed off a quick message to Kinkaid: "Central Force heavily damaged according to strike reports. Am proceeding north with three groups to attack carrier forces at dawn."

Based on earlier communications, Kinkaid assumed that Task Force 34, including the fast battleships under Admiral Willis Lee, had been formed and would remain on the northern shoulder of the invasion beaches to provide cover against any continuing Japanese surface threat. His interpretation was incorrect. Task Force 34 had not been dispatched, and Lee's battleships were steaming north with the rest of Halsey's fleet.

Battle of Surigao Strait

The Japanese Southern Force was spotted in the Sulu Sea early on 25 October and Kinkaid, assuming Halsey had left the fast battleships on station, ordered the old battleships and cruisers of the Seventh Fleet shore bombardment force under Admiral Jesse Oldendorf to intercept the approaching enemy task forces in Surigao Strait. Oldendorf organised an ambush, arraying his PT-boats and destroyers on each flank to harass the Japanese as they sailed northward through the strait and placing his cruisers and battleships in line across the waterway to execute the classic manoeuvre of crossing the enemy's 'T'. Such a strong firing position allowed Oldendorf's warships, including cruisers and destroyers of the Royal Australian Navy, to fire full broadsides from main batteries while the Japanese would be only able to reply with their forward guns.

The formidable US firing line included the battleships Tennessee, Maryland, California, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, all damaged during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, repaired and subsequently returned to action. They were joined by the battleship Mississippi, and in the darkness

"I CAN SEE PAGODA MASTS, AND I SEE THE BIGGEST MEATBALL FLAG ON THE BIGGEST BATTLESHIP I EVER SAW!"

***Main:** USS Claxton puts up anti aircraft fire as smoke rises from the burning and sinking USS Abner Read*

***Right:** A US sailor is treated for wounds after a Japanese aerial attack*

the American battleship crews awaited the moment of revenge.

As Nishimura sailed into Surigao Strait, the PT-boats and destroyers assailed his force. The battleship Yamashiro, Nishimura's flagship, was struck by a destroyer's torpedo, blew up and sank. Three destroyers were also sent to the bottom of the Pacific. Nishimura later died; however, his squadron pressed on toward near annihilation. In the ensuing one-sided fight, the battleship Fuso was devastated and sank in a hail of American shells. The heavy cruiser Mogami was seriously damaged and later scuttled. Only a single Japanese destroyer survived the onslaught.

Soon enough, Shima's task force began its fateful transit of Surigao Strait. Again, the US PT-boats attacked and a torpedo struck the light cruiser Abukuma, causing the ship to lag behind the formation. Abukuma was sunk by American aircraft within hours. When Shima encountered the blazing hulks of Nishimura's shattered force, he ordered a withdrawal. In the confusion his flagship, the heavy cruiser Nachi, collided with the damaged Mogami. The southern pincer of the Japanese offensive against the Leyte beaches had been broken.

Battle off Samar

When Halsey impetuously sped northward toward Ozawa's Decoy Force — and Kinkaid ordered the Seventh Fleet bombardment force to Surigao Strait — he left only three escort carrier groups to protect the Leyte invasion beaches, including the troops ashore, transports and cargo ships in the vicinity. These groups, designated Taffy 1, 2 and 3, consisted only of small escort or 'jeep' carriers, destroyers and destroyer escorts. Their primary missions were to conduct anti-submarine patrols and provide direct aerial support to the ground troops on the island. The largest gun aboard any of these ships was the standard five-incher.

The northernmost of the three escort carrier groups, Taffy 3, was under the command of Admiral Clifton AF Sprague and consisted of six escort carriers, three destroyers and four destroyer escorts. 25 October, 1944, had begun as any other day with routine flight operations, but just after 6:30am an ominous report reached Sprague. The pilot of a Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo plane on patrol had spotted a number of ships near the exit from San Bernardino Strait. He expected these vessels to belong to Halsey's battle group. However, on closer inspection he was astonished.

The pilot notified Sprague of the sighting of Kurita's Center Force, but the admiral's first reaction was disbelief. He wanted proof and asked if the big ships were actually American. The response was emphatic: "I can see pagoda masts, and I see the biggest meatball flag on the biggest battleship I ever saw!" The awe-inspiring sight was Yamato, damaged in the Sibuyan Sea but still quite capable of devastating Taffy 3. There were other Japanese battleships and cruisers steaming ahead with destroyers in the vanguard. Kurita was on the brink of a brilliant victory.

But Taffy 3 was in the way. Sprague's escort carriers were too slow to outrun the Japanese, so there was no alternative but to stand and fight against overwhelming odds. The ensuing Battle off Samar remains one of the most stirring chapters in the history of the US Navy.

Sprague ordered his small warships to make smoke, and torpedo attacks were organised against the Japanese battleships and cruisers. The destroyers Johnston, Heermann and Hoel rushed forward, firing away with their five-inch guns. A torpedo from Johnston blew the bow off the Japanese heavy cruiser Kumano, and the little destroyer scored numerous hits with its main batteries. On more than one occasion, heavy Japanese warships were caught in the five-inch crossfire

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

of two destroyers, and in the chaotic cat-and-mouse contest there may well have been incidents of friendly fire, one Japanese warship hitting another.

Torpedoes from either Hoel or Heermann forced Yamato to take evasive action, running northward and taking Admiral Kurita temporarily away from the combat area, diminishing his operational control of the battle. All the while, American aircraft harassed the Center Force, some pilots executing dummy runs when their bombs, rockets or other ordnance had been expended, to distract the Japanese gunners. Fighter planes exhausted their .50-calibre machine gun ammunition in strafing runs on the superstructures of Japanese ships. One aircraft dropped depth charges on a Japanese destroyer.

At the same time, the escort carriers were chased by salvoes from the big Japanese guns and made for a rain squall, which provided some cover. The Japanese crews had difficulty locking on to their targets amid the smoke and swirling action. Their fire control was inadequate, while the Americans were operating the Mark 37 gun fire-control system, enabling the destroyers to maintain accuracy and a steady rate of fire amid the twists and turns once a target was acquired.

As the battle wore on, the ferocity of the Taffy 3 resistance convinced Kurita that he was facing US cruisers and battleships as well as Halsey's fleet carriers. The Japanese cruisers Suzuya, Chokai and Chikuma were sunk, and Kumano was seriously damaged.

When the Japanese gunners found the range, the gallant American destroyers paid a heavy price. Johnston and Hoel were sunk amid torrents of six-, eight-, 14- and 18-inch shells from the enemy cruisers and battleships. The destroyer escort Samuel B Roberts also went down after firing more than 600 five-inch rounds and slugging it out with the heavier Japanese ships.

Yamato hit by a bomb near her forward gun turret in the Sibuyan Sea, 24 October 1944

The escort carriers suffered as well. Some large-calibre Japanese shells passed right through their thin armour plating without exploding, but Gambier Bay was assailed by several cruisers and sank, the only American carrier lost to gunfire from surface ships in World War II. Kalinin Bay took 15 direct hits but survived. In one of the first attacks of its kind in the conflict, St Lo was sunk when a Japanese kamikaze suicide plane crashed into its flight deck.

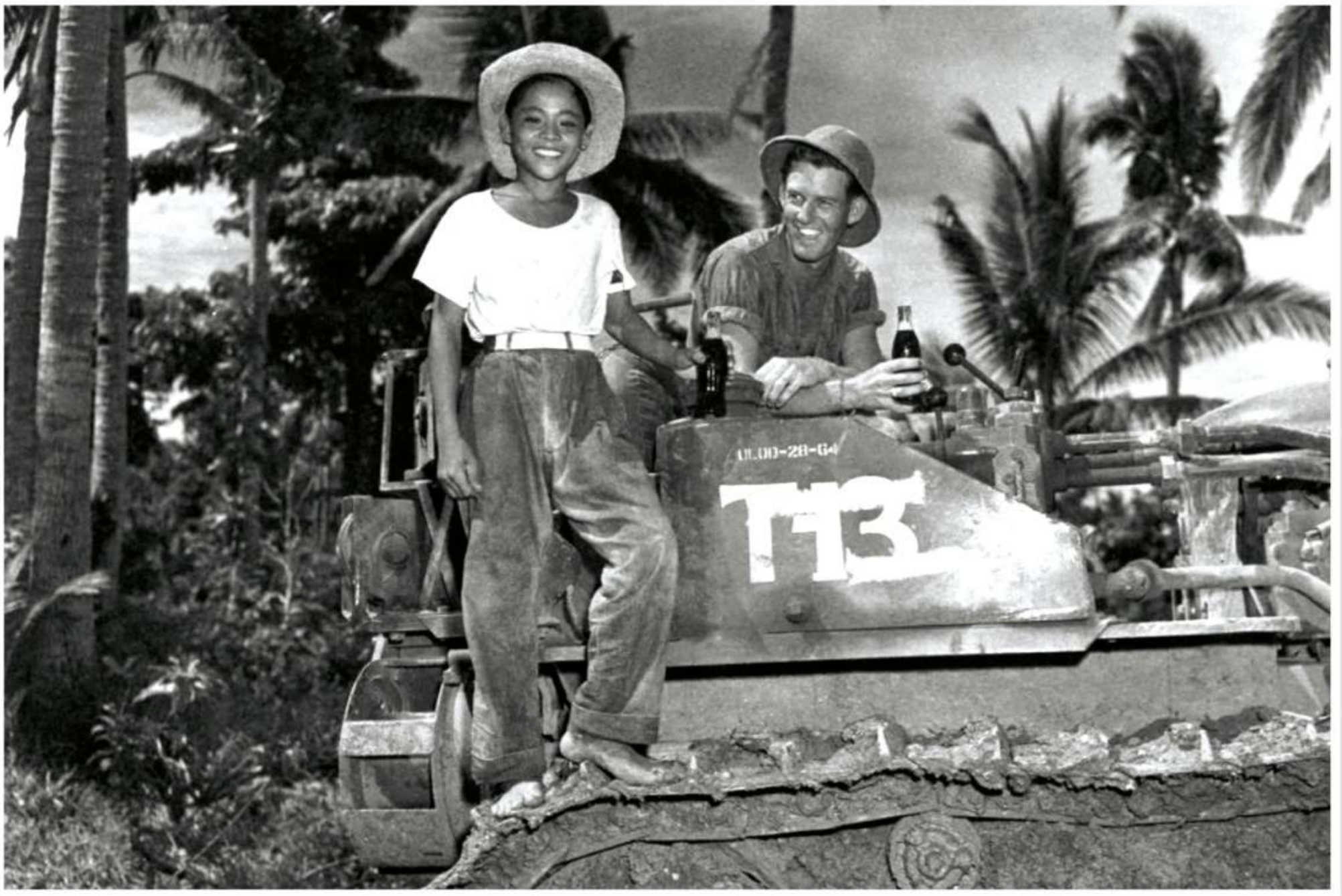
Kurita was concerned that his force had sustained considerable damage and was unaware of whether Ozawa's Decoy Force had succeeded in its mission to lure Halsey away from San Bernardino Strait. Amid the confusion – and with victory in his grasp – Kurita ordered a general retirement.

It was a stunning turn of events. The small American warships had thwarted the Japanese effort. One sailor realised what was happening and yelled: "Dammit, boys! They're getting away!"

Throughout the ordeal of Taffy 3, Kinkaid desperately called for support from the fast battleships of Task Force 34, which he believed were still nearby. From Hawaii, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, sent a message to Halsey asking, "…where is rpt where is task force thirty four rr the world wonders?" It was customary to 'pad' communications with meaningless words before and afterward in order to confuse Japanese codebreakers. In the rush to deliver

"IN ONE OF THE FIRST ATTACKS OF ITS KIND IN THE CONFLICT, ST LO WAS SUNK WHEN A JAPANESE KAMIKAZE SUICIDE PLANE CRASHED INTO ITS FLIGHT DECK"

The crew of the Japanese aircraft carrier Zuikaku salute as the flag is lowered during the Battle off Cape Engaño, 25 October 1944



***Above:** A young Filipino boy pictured with an American bulldozer operator of the 64th Seabees (United States Naval Construction Forces)*

the message from Nimitz, a radioman failed to eliminate the padding phrase “the world wonders”. Halsey read the full text and erupted in dismay at what he believed was a stinging rebuke.

Halsey detached some heavy forces toward San Bernardino Strait but they did not participate in the primary action off Samar. Meanwhile, his carrier-based aircraft pummeled Ozawa, sinking four aircraft carriers and decimating the Decoy Force. Among the Japanese aircraft carriers sent to watery graves was Zuikaku, the last survivor of the carrier force that had attacked Pearl Harbor.

Although Kurita’s Center Force had turned away, questions persisted. Could the sacrifice of Taffy 3 have been averted and an even greater defeat inflicted on the Japanese?

Aftermath

In the end, the Battle of Leyte Gulf was a resounding US victory. The offensive capability of the Imperial Japanese Navy was destroyed and American operations on land, sea and air in the Philippines would continue without pause. The next major Imperial Navy sortie would occur in the spring of 1945 during the battle for Okinawa. It was a one-way suicide mission, and the great Yamato met its demise in a hail of bombs and torpedoes from American carrier planes.

Despite the result, the Battle of Leyte Gulf had been a near-run thing. It was the heroism of the US Navy’s ‘small boys’ that saved the day off Samar and preserved the victory. The Japanese offensive had failed and the Imperial Navy lost four carriers, three battleships, six heavy cruisers, four light cruisers, 11 destroyers, 300 aircraft and more than 12,000 casualties. The US Navy suffered the loss of the light carrier Princeton, the escort carriers Gambier Bay and Kitkun Bay, the destroyers Johnston and Hoel, the destroyer escort Samuel B Roberts, 255 planes and 3,000 men killed or wounded.

In the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the decades since, Halsey has been criticised for his tactical actions. However, an absence of unified command among the naval forces, as Halsey reported to Nimitz and Kinkaid was subordinate to MacArthur, contributed to the confusion regarding the defence of the northern shoulder of the landing beaches near San Bernardino Strait.

Halsey spent much of his remaining career defending his command decisions at Leyte Gulf. In an article he wrote for the May 1952 edition of the Naval Institute’s *Proceedings*, he offered: “If the two fleets had been under the same command with a single system of operational control and intelligence, the Battle for Leyte Gulf might have been fought differently and with better coordination.” He went on to add: “My decision was to strike the Northern Force. Given the same circumstances and the same information as I had then, I would make it again.”

Nevertheless, historian Samuel Eliot Morison observed: “If [the battleships] had been detached a few hours earlier… Admiral Lee, the most experienced battle squadron commander in the Navy, would have arrived off San Bernardino Strait in time to have clashed with Kurita’s Centre Force… Apart from the accidents common in naval warfare, there is every reason to suppose that Lee would have crossed the T of Kurita’s fleet and completed the destruction of Center Force.”

As the situation unfolded off Samar on 25 October 1944, the ‘what ifs?’ of the Battle of Leyte Gulf were, in fact, moot. The heroism of Sprague and the intrepid sailors of Taffy 3 proved that there is no substitute for devotion to duty and willing sacrifice in the face of daunting odds.

The fierce debate surrounding Halsey’s command decisions at the Battle of Leyte Gulf persists to this day, but the victory of the US Navy is undisputed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Baldwin, Hanson W., Battles Lost and Won: Great Campaigns of World War II (1966)
- Spector, Ronald, Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan (1985)
- Thomas, Evan, Sea of Thunder: Four Commanders and the Last Great Naval Campaign 1941-1945 (2007)

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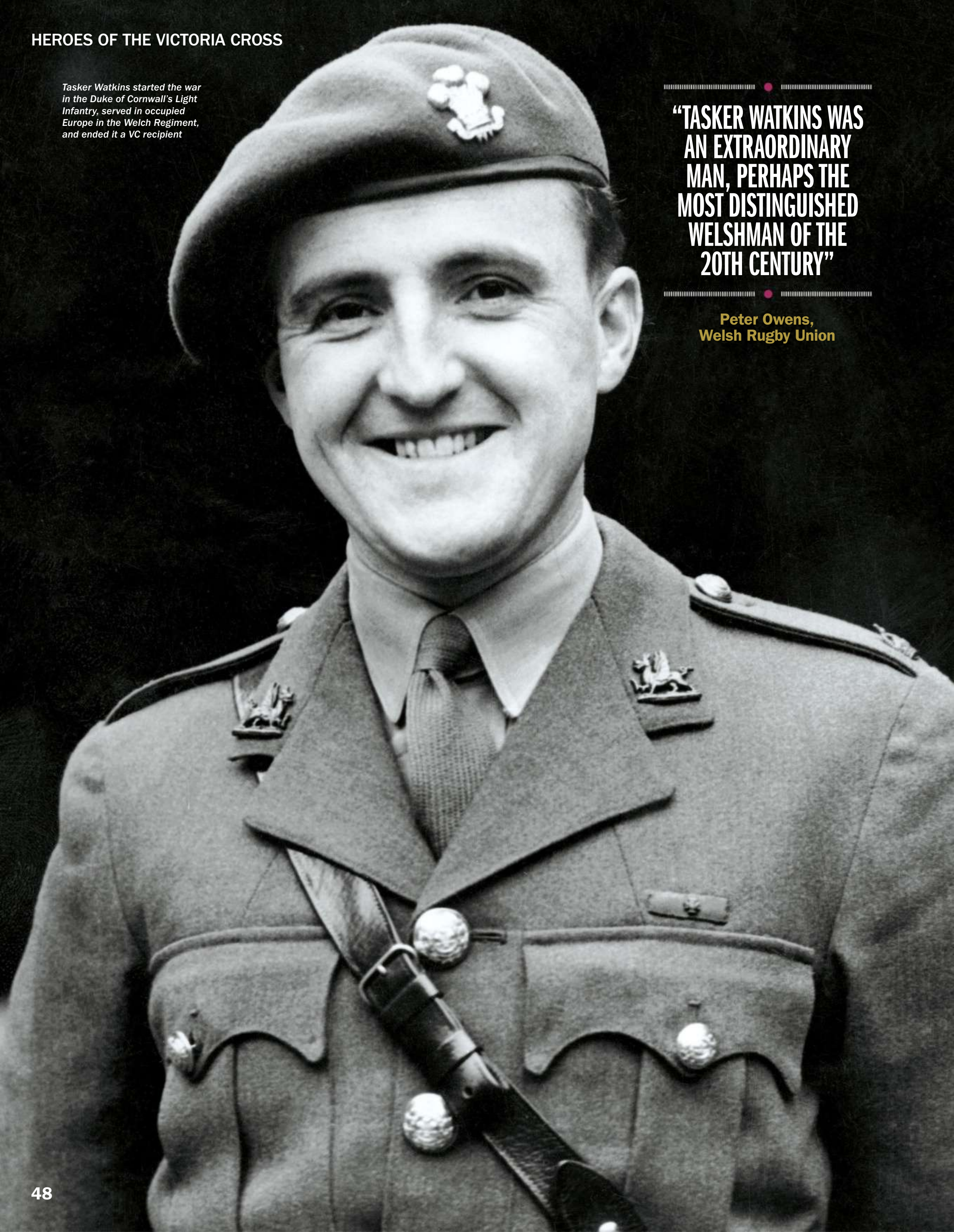
Tasker Watkins started the war in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, served in occupied Europe in the Welch Regiment, and ended it a VC recipient



"TASKER WATKINS WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN, PERHAPS THE MOST DISTINGUISHED WELSHMAN OF THE 20TH CENTURY"

Peter Owens, Welsh Rugby Union

Heroes of the Victoria Cross

TASKER WATKINS

In August 1944, as the Allies battled to close the Falaise Gap in Normandy, this Welsh officer single-handedly silenced multiple German positions to save his men

WORDS **ALEX BOWERS**

The cornfield quivered with bullets and falling bodies as the light faded across Normandy. 1/5th Welch Regiment's B Company – a contingent of the 53rd (Welsh) Division – had lost radio contact with battalion headquarters and their fellow attackers in C Company, while their tank support was no longer engaged. With every other officer killed or wounded by enemy machine guns, small-arms or booby-traps laid in the crop, Captain Tasker Watkins had been thrust into command of a force facing perilous odds. Unknown to the athletic and intelligent Welshman, a brigade communique had been sent instructing the unit not to advance beyond the road that eventually led into German-held Falaise. However, since there was no way of receiving the order, Watkins decided that he and his surviving comrades had little choice but to fight on.

It was 16 August 1944, and the bitter struggle to end Nazi resistance in the Falaise Gap was coming to a head. With two German armies almost encircled in a small pocket around the French town, the 1/5th Welch Regiment had been tasked with challenging the besieged defenders, as well as cutting off a potential enemy escape route. In the period leading up to the engagement, the terrain had been favourable for the Allies, and had enabled British and Canadian forces to conceal their advance through thick woodland. But once opened up to the region's villages, fields and hedgerows, the advantage was for the enemy to seize. Early on 16 August in the community of Leffard, about 10km from Falaise, the men had come under heavy artillery fire and had abandoned their vehicles for the relative safety of the trees.

***Above:** A statue of Tasker Watkins, VC, stands outside the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, honouring his outstanding performance of duty in military service and sport*

They had then pushed onwards to another village, Martigny-sur-l'Ante, where Sherman and Churchill tanks of the Royal Armoured Corps' 155th Regiment joined them for the final approach. Dusk had started to descend by the time Watkins' B Company, on the left flank, had moved ahead with C Company accompanying them and the tanks on the high ground raining shells down on the nearby strongholds. In reserve was A Company, ready to assist or capitalise on any successes, while D Company and battalion HQ stayed back to ensure the operation ran smoothly. All had been going well until a hidden German 88mm anti-tank gun lurched into action and machine-gun posts began decimating the attacking parties.

Now, leading from the front, Watkins and those with him charged forward. The 25-year-old son of a mine fitter – born a week after the Great War's conclusion only to prove his worth in the current conflict – sprayed Sten gun rounds into the nest to kill several Germans within. It was at that point that the 88mm zeroed in on their newly taken position. Singlehandedly, Watkins ran at it and dispatched all but one of the gunners, the final occupant staring down the barrel

All images © Alamy, Getty

of the captain's weapon before it jammed. Undoubtedly horrified at the sudden turn of events, Watkins hurled the Sten at the lone soldier, knocking him off balance, and managed to draw his pistol to shoot his assailant. Returning to his men, he ordered them to fall back into the cornfields as a German counterattack commenced. A fierce firefight followed, although it soon became apparent that the Welsh had the upper hand. Their leader, having already inspired much courage and fortitude, rallied them once more for a bayonet charge.

There would be no rest or respite from the day's orgy of violence — after the Germans immediately in front of them had been routed yet another machine gun let loose. Watkins again went alone to confront the enemy, this time choosing to creep up on them. He succeeded in catching them by surprise and killed or wounded the entire crew. Their objectives achieved but unable to receive new orders from HQ, B Company stayed low, held their position and waited for reinforcements. Night was drawing in fast as flares, cast into the dark sky by the pursuing Germans, revealed strange, flickering shadows. The rustling of parting corn suggested another imminent attack. When it became apparent that no support would relieve the unit, Watkins

"ALTHOUGH SMALL OF STATURE, [HE] WAS A GIANT IN WHATEVER ROLE HE OPERATED, ALWAYS EXTREMELY ABLE AND DEEPLY RESPECTED BY OTHERS"

Peter Owens, Welsh Rugby Union

hastened a withdrawal. They would need to go around one of the enemy flanks, a remarkable feat of stealth that was within grasp until an outpost caught sight of them. The captain insisted that his men scatter, intent on saving as many of their lives as possible. He then grabbed a Bren gun and, once again, he stormed the enemy post to subdue it.

Now Watkins was finally free to escort the remnants of his force, alongside prisoners, to their own lines. Despite mourning the loss of 33 casualties from an initial strength of 60, miraculously the party's sole surviving commanding officer was unscathed from his various heroic actions.

The next day – 17 August 1944 – a sizable enemy force escaped through the Falaise Gap. The pocket itself was sealed on 21 August, leaving the remaining Germans trapped. By the 30th of that month, the decisive Normandy campaign had been won. Meanwhile Watkins, since promoted to major, and the rest of the 1/5th Welch Regiment continued to be embroiled in combat.

The ever-slowing advance took them to 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands. Here Watkins' war would end after he was struck by shrapnel in the right leg and abdomen as he crossed a canal. Evacuated to Brussels before being transferred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, doctors managed to avoid amputation when his condition stabilised. It was during his recuperation that news reached him of his recommendation for the Victoria Cross. His citation reads in part: "[Watkins'] superb gallantry and total disregard for his own safety during an extremely difficult period were

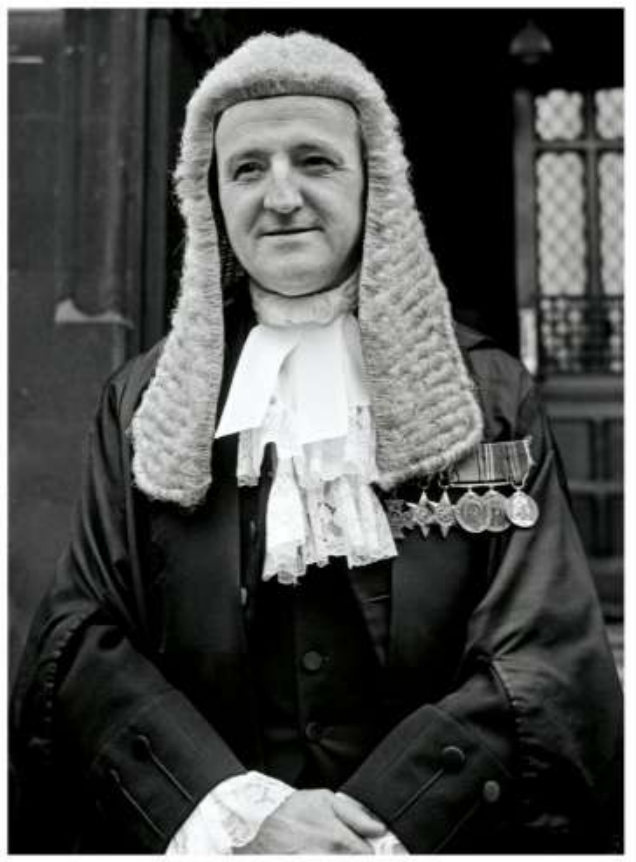
***Below:** German prisoners, captured following the Battle of the Falaise Pocket in August 1944, are marched to a POW camp*

responsible for saving the lives of his men, and had a decisive influence on the course of the battle." Upon hearing of the award, Watkins later recounted that he turned over in his bed and went back to sleep. Nevertheless, the first Welsh VC winner of World War II was presented with the medal by the king at Buckingham Palace on 8 March 1945.

After the war Watkins seldom spoke about his exploits, and in the rare instances that he did he was humble. "You must believe me when I say it was just another day in the life of a soldier," he once told an interviewer. "I did what needed doing to help colleagues and friends… I didn't wake up the next day a better person, just different… I have [since] tried to take a more caring view of my fellow human beings."

Focusing his energy on law and sport, he would serve as a barrister from 1948, rising to the top of his profession over the coming decades. In 1966, he was deputy to the Attorney General as counsel to the Aberfan disaster inquiry. In 1971, not only did he become a judge but was likewise knighted. The height of Watkins' career saw him attain the role of Deputy Chief Justice of England in 1988. In the world of rugby, his most beloved passion, he had been elected as president of the Glamorgan Wanderers in 1968. Once he had retired from the judiciary in 1993 he took on the presidency of the Welsh Rugby Union, a post he held for 11 years. Sadly, in 2007, Watkins fell at his home in Llandaff and was admitted to the University of Wales Hospital. He died on 9 September, aged 88. With Wales' first match of the Rugby World Cup due to take place that day in Nantes, France, the Welsh players wore black armbands in his honour.

The late major, barrister, judge and rugby figure would receive other such honours, including a green flash with the letters "STW-VC" (standing for "Sir Tasker Watkins, VC") imprinted on the Glamorgan Wanderers' playing shirt. Outside the Principality Stadium in Cardiff a statue of Watkins has been erected in recognition of his service to the sport, as well as his esteemed army service. Peter Owens, a representative of the Welsh Rugby Union who had the privilege of working with him, said of his legacy: "Tasker Watkins was an extraordinary man, perhaps the most distinguished Welshman of the 20th century. His wartime military career displayed great courage and strong leadership qualities… His love of rugby football and his native country, combined with his considerable strength as a leader of men and women, made Sir Tasker a wonderful President of the Welsh Rugby Union… Although small of stature, [he] was a giant in whatever role he operated, always extremely able and deeply respected by others."



***Above:** Watkins, seen here as an appointed member of the Queen's Counsel and adorning his Victoria Cross, rose to become Deputy Chief Justice of England*

***Below:** HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Major Tasker Watkins, VC, visit the Welsh National War Memorial in 1954*

All images © Alamy, Getty

10 PLACES THAT TELL THE STORY OF THE SOMME

A century ago the Somme was the scene of a devastating battle, today it offers us a unique insight into World War I

WORDS **PAUL REED**

On a beautiful summer's morning over a century ago, men of the British Army stepped out into no-man's land at 7.30am. It was 1 July 1916 and the start of what was then called 'The Big Push'. With high hopes of a walkover to victory, the Tommies stepped into what can only be described as machine-gun oblivion. By the end of the day more than 57,000 were casualties, with nearly 20,000 dead. But the Battle of the Somme raged on. The Germans were pushed back, new weapons and tactics helped the British Army win battles, then the weather turned the area into a quagmire ending with the coldest winter in Europe for decades. The Pyrrhic victory of the Somme cost more than 400,000 British and Commonwealth casualties and moved World War I into the dark heart of industrial warfare.

Today the Somme battlefields offer a unique insight into not only the battle in 1916 but the wider context of the war as it is a landscape full of locations that bore witness to the fighting. You can walk the trenches, gaze at the huge mine craters, see ground pock-marked with shell craters and pause for reflection at the many military cemeteries and memorials. The history is right there in front of you, making any visit moving and memorable.

POETS ON THE SOMME

Major war poets like Robert Graves, Ivor Gurney and Siegfried Sassoon all fought here, impacting on the Somme's cultural legacy.

Historial Museum of the Great War, Peronne

This excellent war museum opened in 1994 with an ultra-modern design but with its roots firmly in the past. It was built among the ruins of the old citadel of Peronne, which are former Medieval fortifications that were a German headquarters at the time of the Somme in 1916. The museum sets any visit to the battlefields of the Somme into context as the road to war is explained in much detail, with large maps and artefacts from life in pre-1914 Europe. Then there is the opportunity to explore further rooms that show the paraphernalia of war: uniforms, weapons and equipment along with a large collection of war art and contemporary films on loop on screens across the museum. Subjects as diverse as what soldiers ate to the way nations mourned their dead are covered here, and there is always a special exhibition to visit as well as a life-size reproduction tank in the main courtyard.

Open daily 9.30am-6pm/9.30am-5pm in winter. €9 (£7/$10) for adults, €4.50 (£3.50/$5) for children

Men from the York and Lancaster Regiment whose 12th Battalion – known as the Sheffield City Battalion – gives its name to the memorial

Sheffield Memorial Park, Serre

It may well be that the sort of men you think of when you imagine the British Army at the Battle of the Somme are the eager volunteers of 1914. Many Northern cities raised so-called 'Pals Battalions' where men from communities enlisted together, trained together and died together. At Serre on 1 July 1916, men from towns like Accrington, Barnsley, Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield were slaughtered here in great numbers.

Walk up the well-signposted track here to the battlefield cemeteries where men lie side by side, down across the old no-man's land to a wooded area where the city of Sheffield has preserved the space as a memorial park since the 1920s. 'Jumping-off' trenches and shell holes are still visible there, along with commemorative memorials, including one built from Accrington brick. The slope that leads to Serre village is gentle and full of corn now, and it can be hard to imagine that it was a killing field a century ago.

Always open, no admission charges. Park on the main road and walk up.

The Sheffield Memorial Park and Railway Hollow British cemetery on the Somme

FOURTH ARMY.
Map Sheet No. 57d
Panorama No. 3 made at 7.30 a.m. B.S.T. on 1st July 2015 from End of the Sunken Lane: 1st Lanes Trenches 7.30 a.m. B.S.T. 1st July 1916
including a field view of 110° from about NE to SSE
Approximate Scale of Degrees (1 degree equals 2/5 inches).
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1. Panoramas are taken solely for military purposes.
2. The publication of them in the press will unnecessarily give valuable information to the enemy.
3. This panorama is to be kept with as much security as is compatible with full advantage of it being taken by our own troops.
4. When troops are relieved this panorama should be handed over to the relieving troops.
M.G. Q5c33.79 450 yds
Frontier Line 650 yds
M.G. Q5c28.71 920 yds
Wagon Road 1100 yds
The Lynchet 80 yds
Enemy Front Line 250 yds
BERGWERK Q5c67 1300 yds M.G.
Snake Trench 800 yds
Ramp Trench 770 yds
Steak Line 680 yds
Coke Trench 730 yds
Artillery Lane 2200 yds
Monument Alley 1100 yds
Enemy Front Line 250 yds
Country Position Q5c57 1000 yds
BEAUCOURT-SUR-ANCRE
BEAUMONT

Images © Historial de la t Guerre – Péronne (Somme) Layous

BIG GUNS

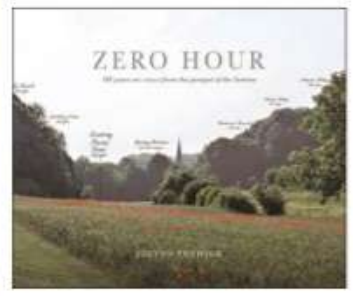
The Somme witnessed some huge artillery bombardments, with 1.75 million shells fired prior to the attack on 1 July 1916 alone.

Newfoundland Memorial Park, Beaumont-Hamel

Newfoundland was the smallest dominion in the British Empire to raise its own regiment in World War I. It served at Gallipoli in 1915 and was almost completely wiped out on the Somme on 1 July 1916 when 710 out of 800 who went into battle became casualties. The Newfoundland government erected bronze caribou memorials on the sites where the regiment fought and, uniquely, the widows and mothers of those lost in the campaign purchased the battlefield where their loved ones had died and preserved it. Visitors can walk the trenches and shell holes of a WWI battlefield, see the massive Y Ravine that was once full of German dugouts, and take time to reflect at the small 'comrades' cemeteries where men who fought and fell together are buried. Young Canadian guides can take you on a free tour here and there is an excellent information centre. This is one of those corners of the Somme where you can almost reach out and touch the past.

Open 10am-5pm, with seasonal opening hours. Admission and tours free.

These stunning panorama images showing Beaumont-Hamel are from the new book by Jolyon Fenwick, Zero Hour: 100 Years On: Views From the Parapet of the Somme. It is published in hardback by Profile Books, costs £25 and is available now.



Butte de Warlencourt

The Battle of the Somme ended in a snow storm in November 1916, by which time the British Army had suffered 450,000 casualties. The Butte saw some of the final fighting as men from many regiments battled for its possession. Today it has been preserved by the Western Front Association and you can walk up to the top via a wooden walkway, see the signs of battle around you, and get amazing views across the battlefield from the top.

Crucifix Corner, Bazentin le Petit

The wrought-iron figure of Christ on the Cross that stands among the trees here is a survivor of the Somme. As evidenced by the shrapnel marks to the statue, on Christ's body and feet, it is clear to see that it stood on this spot a century ago as the battle was fought around it. Men passed it on their way to the front line, looking up and hoping for salvation. Walk up the little steps in front and stand in the shade of the trees with this amazing survivor from 1916.

Pozières Windmill Battlefield

Located on the highest point of the Somme battlefields, the whole 29km-long front can be viewed from here. A stone windmill once stood on this spot, fortified by the Germans in 1916, and the Australian memorial records more Diggers fell here than on any other WWI battlefield. At the site there is also a memorial flanked by bronze tank models on the spot where the first tanks went into action in the attack on Courcelette in September 1916.

Delville Wood, Longueval

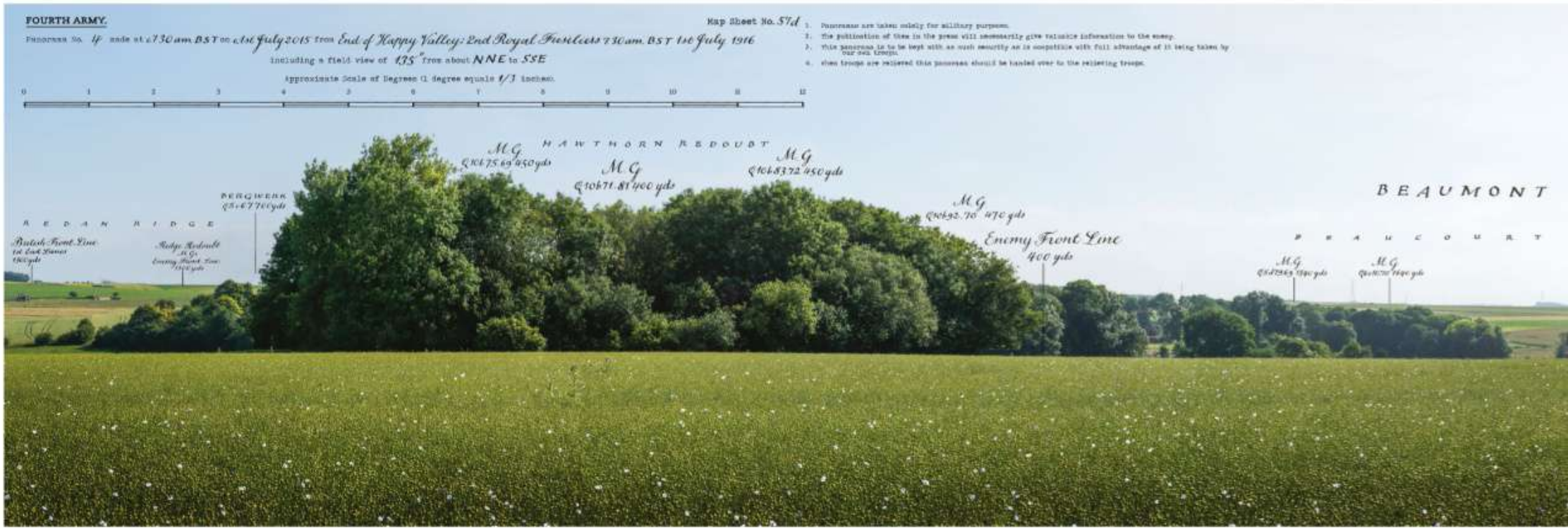
Two weeks into the Battle of the Somme, the Germans were being pushed back and the South African Brigade of more than 3,100 officers and men marched into Delville Wood to hold it. Six days later, the wood was still held but only 750 South Africans marched out. They lost more men here than on any other WWI battlefield and so built the South African National Memorial. Beyond this is the new South African war museum. Among the wood you can also walk trench lines.

Lochnagar Crater, La Boisselle

World War I saw fighting underground as well as on the surface: once both sides dug in at the end of 1914 it became trench warfare on a huge scale, and military miners tunnelled under the battlefield to destroy enemy defences. As part of the Somme offensive in 1916, a large number of mines were blown to start the attack and Lochnagar, which takes its name from the trench where the tunnels started from, was blown a few minutes before the attacking troops went into battle. It didn't quite go to plan, however, and more than 27,000kg of explosive probably only killed a handful of Germans. This resulted in terrible slaughter when the Tommies went over the top, with more than 6,000 casualties, many of them from the Tyneside battalions. Bought by Englishman Richard Dunning in 1978, he preserved it and now it is an important memorial site as well as visible evidence of the war underground.

Maintained by The Lochnagar Crater Foundation, the site is always open, with free admission.

A commemorative ceremony at the crater memorial site in 2006


FOURTH ARMY.
Map Sheet No. 57d
Panorama No. 4 made at 7.30 am. BST on 31st July 2015 from End of Happy Valley: 2nd Royal Fusiliers 7.30 am. BST 1st July 1916
including a field view of 135° from about NNE to SSE
Approximate Scale of Degrees (1 degree equals 1/3 inches)
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
1. Panoramas are taken solely for military purposes.
2. The publication of them in the press will necessarily give valuable information to the enemy.
3. This panorama is to be kept with as much security as is compatible with full advantage of it being taken by our own troops.
4. When troops are relieved this panorama should be handed over to the relieving troops.
HAWTHORN REDOUT
M.G. 1075.69 450 yds
M.G. 0671.81 400 yds
M.G. 1048372 450 yds
M.G. 0692.70 470 yds
Enemy Front Line 400 yds
BERGWERK
BEAUMONT
BEAUCOURT
M.G.
M.G.

Sunken Lane, Hawthorn Ridge

The Somme has many sunken lanes, and this one is where the Lancashire Fusiliers were filmed with fixed bayonets before they charged into battle in 1916. Across from the lane is Hawthorn Ridge, where huge underground mines were detonated beneath German positions on 1 July and again on 13 November. The first explosion was captured on film and you can follow a path up to the crater, which is now filled with trees.

Public areas of the site are always open.

Thiepval Memorial & Visitors Centre

Unveiled in 1932, this huge Edwin Lutyens-designed memorial to the missing commemorates more than 72,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers who have no known grave. It is one of those places where the sheer scale of World War I really hits home. The name of every regiment of the British Army can be seen on its panels, accompanied by awe-inspiring views across the Somme landscape. Since 2006, an excellent staffed visitors centre has offered films, information and a unique database with further information on the missing to explore.

The memorial is always open, the visitor centre daily with winter closing. Admission is free.

Images © ThinkstocK, Getty, Alamy, Rex, Paul Reed, Christine McIntosh, Keawe Woodmore, Sean Jackson, Jolyon Fenwick, Amanda Slater, Carcharoth, Markus3, Wernervc, Joe Anderson, Historial de la Grande Guerre – Péronne (Somme) et © Yazid Medmoun, MFarcy, Alexis Layous

MCDONNELL F2H BANSHEE

Take a look inside the US first-generation carrier-borne jet

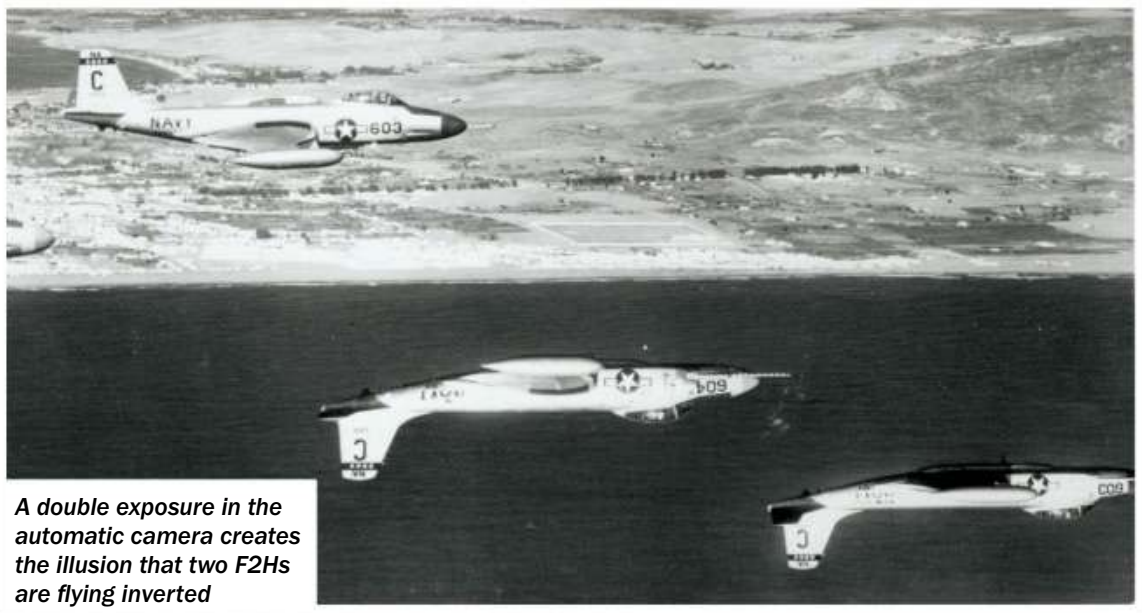
WORDS STUART HADAWAY

LOW-SLUNG GUNS

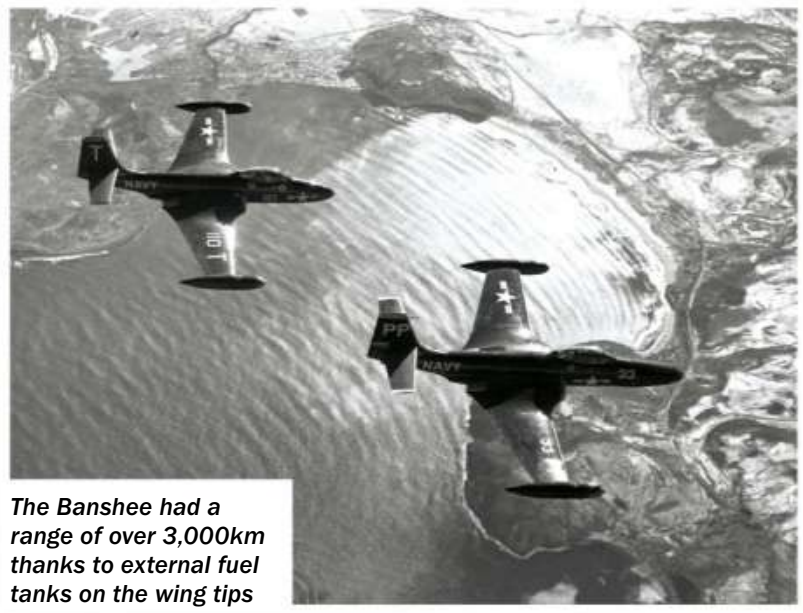
The contemporary Panther jet had its four cannon mounted high in the nose, but the muzzle flashes could dazzle the pilot. On the Banshee they were moved down to below the cockpit, out of direct view.

KNEELING NOSE

Early models had a second, shorter nose wheel onto which weight could be transferred from the main wheel. Tilting the nose down like this was supposed to enable Banshees to overlap in hanger decks, fitting more in.



A double exposure in the automatic camera creates the illusion that two F2Hs are flying inverted



The Banshee had a range of over 3,000km thanks to external fuel tanks on the wing tips

In the 1940s and early 1950s, the development of the first generation of jet technology was incredibly fast-paced. New designs, based on new science and new technology, almost stumbled over each other, and sometimes aircraft were obsolete even as the first airframes rolled off the production line.

The McDonnell FH Phantom was one of these, commissioned in 1942 and already outdated when it entered service as the US Navy's (USN) first carrier-borne jet fighter in 1945. The same year, a more advanced version, the McDonnell F2H Banshee, was commissioned. Entering service in 1948 it was longer-ranged, much more heavily armed and considerably faster.

The Banshee would itself go through rapid development and many versions in its short career. Variants would be the USN's and US Marine Corps' (USMC) first single-seat jet night-fighter, and first jet reconnaissance aircraft. Although it was soon outclassed by contemporary land-based aircraft in terms of speed, it had a very high ceiling, ideal for escorting or intercepting bombers. However, it was as a ground-attack aircraft that the Banshee, affectionately known as the 'Banjo', would see active service during the Korean War of 1950-53.

"IT WAS AS A GROUND-ATTACK AIRCRAFT THAT THE MCDONNELL BANSHEE F2H, AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS THE 'BANJO', WOULD SEE ACTIVE SERVICE DURING THE KOREAN WAR OF 1950-53"

FIRST-GENERATION WINGS

The Banshee was not fast enough to require swept-back wings for peak efficiency. The leading edges were straight while the rear edges – with flaps, ailerons and air brakes – were angled forwards towards the tips.

EXTERNAL TANKS

Most Banshee types had external tanks fitted at the wing tips. These were fairly common in early jets, whose engines required large amounts of fuel, but unusually those on the Banshee were detachable.

Illustration: Nicholas Forder

A formation of USN Banshees fly over their aircraft carrier

MCDONNELL F2H BANSHEE

COMMISSIONED	1945
ORIGIN	USA
LENGTH	14.68M (48FT 2IN)
WINGSPAN	12.73M (41FT 9IN)
ENGINE	2 X WESTINGHOUSE J34-WE-34 14.5KN (3,250LB) TURBOJETS
CREW	1
PRIMARY WEAPON	4 X 20MM (0.787IN) CANNON
SECONDARY WEAPON	UP TO 1,450KG (3,200LB) OF BOMBS AND ROCKETS

All images © Alamy, Getty

ARMAMENT

The Banshee's main armament was four 20mm (0.787in) Colt Mk. 12 cannon, set quite far back in the lower nose, beneath the cockpit. Intended for use as a fighter/interceptor, the Banshee was very soon modified for ground-attack operations. Four pylons were fitted under each wing and could carry a maximum of 1,450kg (3,200lb) of ordnance in a mix of 226kg (500lb), 90kg (200lb), or 45kg (100lb) bombs, or 130mm (5in) air-to-air or air-to-ground rockets. From 1958, the type was also fitted with the AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missile.

A Banshee conducts a bombing run over Korea

The Banshee had two cannon mounted either side under the cockpit

"INTENDED FOR USE AS A FIGHTER/INTERCEPTOR, THE BANSHEE WAS VERY SOON MODIFIED FOR GROUND-ATTACK OPERATIONS"

***Below:** The aircraft's very high ceiling made it ideal for escorting or intercepting bombers*

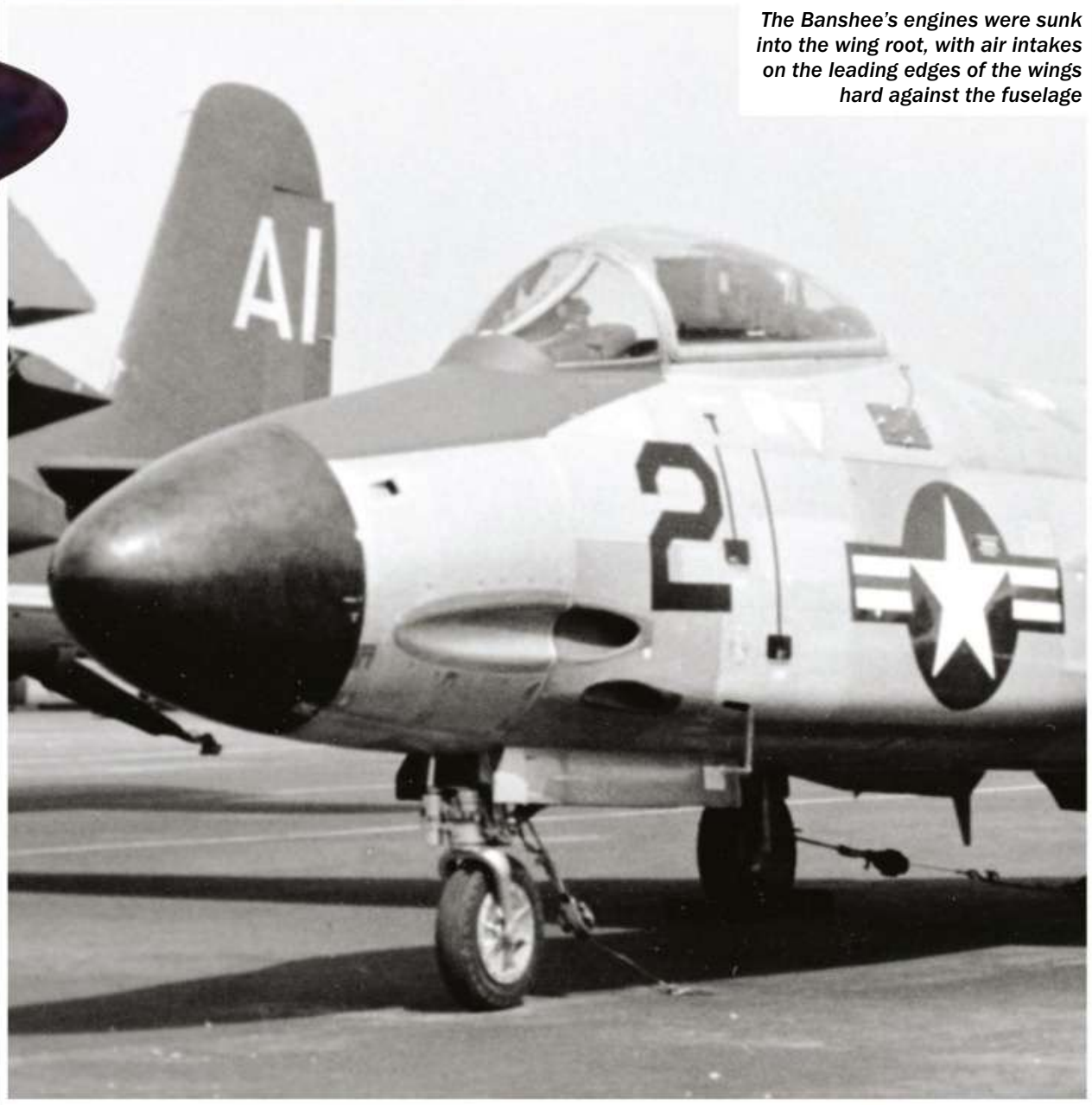
A USN McDonnell F2H Banshee launches from a carrier, 1956

***Above:** One of the Banshee's most distinctive features was the wing design, with an oddly forward-swept look*

DESIGN

The Banshee had a metal monocoque structure with an aluminum skin. The two engines were sunk into the wing roots, and the wings were slightly angled to avoid the heat of the exhausts. The airframe was intentionally designed to limit speeds and maximise low-speed performance to make operating off aircraft carriers safer. The central fuselage contained three fuel tanks, and along with the two wing-tip tanks this gave the Banshee the astonishing range of 3,060km (1,900 miles), although the combat range was around 1,600km (1,000 miles).

***Left:** The Banshee was designed specifically for naval operations, with modifications to fit into the tight confines of carrier hangers and decks*

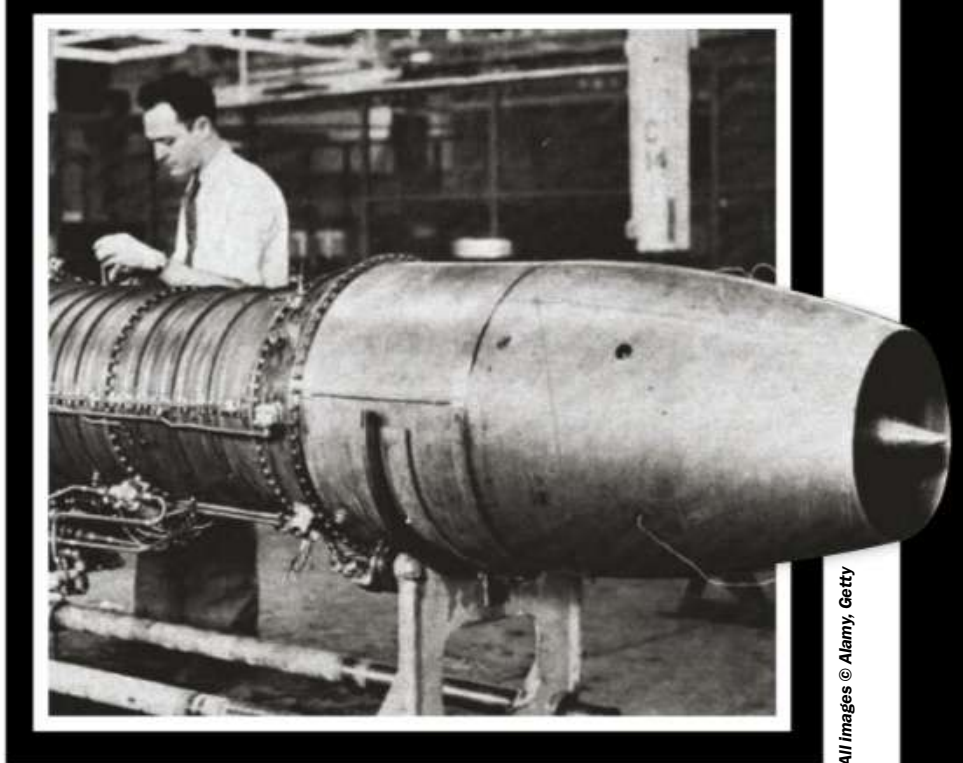


The Banshee's engines were sunk into the wing root, with air intakes on the leading edges of the wings hard against the fuselage

ENGINE

Jet engine development moved just as fast as that of airframes in the early years. The Westinghouse J34 had an 11-stage axial compressor with a two-stage turbine. It was rated at 14.5kN (3,250lb) – twice that of its predecessor the J30. From 1947 to 1959, the type went through nearly 30 different models and was used in around 15 different aircraft types. It was only declared obsolete when the next model, the J46, was introduced with an afterburner. The Banshee used two J34-WE-34 engines.

A Westinghouse J34 under test, 1947



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COCKPIT

The Banshee's cockpit sat far forward in front of the engines, giving the pilot an excellent all-round view. The cockpit was pressurised and air-conditioned, and the pilot had an ejector seat. (The first successful emergency ejection from a US aircraft was carried out by Lieutenant JL Fruin USN in 1949.) The Banshee was equipped with radar and an automatic pilot, and most of the external controls – ailerons, flaps, air brakes, folding wings and canopy – were electrically operated rather than pneumatic.

"MOST OF THE EXTERNAL CONTROLS WERE ELECTRICALLY OPERATED RATHER THAN PNEUMATIC"

A pilot climbs into a Banshee cockpit, which sat high and forward, giving the pilot excellent fields of view

A Banshee flown by the Royal Canadian Navy is on display at the Shearwater Aviation Museum in Nova Scotia

***Above:** The F2H Banshee was first used by the USN and USMC in 1948 and remained in frontline US service until 1959*

SERVICE HISTORY

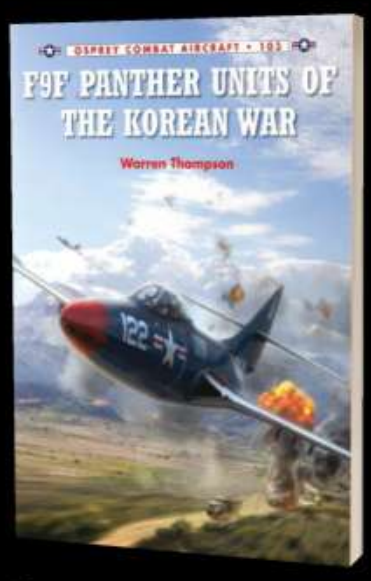
The Banshee entered service with the USN and USMC in 1948. Although intended as a long-range high-altitude bomber escort and as a fleet defence interceptor, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 saw the type being pressed into service for ground-attack missions. Its relatively slow speeds left it vulnerable to Communist MiG-15s but made it ideal for supporting troops on the ground. The type remained in frontline US service until 1959 and with the reserves until 1961. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) also acquired the Banshee. Initial plans to buy new aircraft were delayed, and eventually 39 reconditioned US airframes were purchased in 1955, enough for two squadrons. The type became the RCN's first and last jet-powered carrier aircraft, with one squadron at a time deployed on the RCN's only carrier for fleet defence, while the other performed air defence duties in Canada. The type was retired in 1962.

A Banshee of VF-11 'Red Rippers' in flight over Korea, 1952

An RCN Banshee launches from the deck of the HMCS Bonaventure, 1957

OSPREY COMBAT AIRCRAFT 103
F9F PANTHER UNITS OF THE KOREAN WAR
BY WARREN THOMPSON

The Grumman F9F Panther operated from aircraft carriers off the Korean coast, helping to stop the North Korean invasion within two weeks of the communists crossing the 38th Parallel on 25 June 1950. Panthers, escorting carrier-based piston-engine aircraft, penetrated as far north as Pyongyang, where they bombed and strafed targets. This volume, by prolific Korean air war author Warren Thompson, details all of these actions through first-hand accounts, colour photographs and 30 profile artworks.



F9F PANTHER VS COMMUNIST AAA
KOREA 1950-53
BY PETER E DAVIES

This volume details the deadly battle between US Navy/US Marine Corps F9F Panther jet fighter-bombers and communist anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) defences that proliferated in North Korea throughout the Korean War. The book contains numerous first-hand accounts and tactical diagrams explaining how F9F pilots dealt with the highly effective AAA that was used by the enemy. Both the F9F and the weapons fielded against it are included in newly commissioned artwork, supported by more than 50 archival photographs.

OSPREY COMBAT AIRCRAFT 141
F2H BANSHEE UNITS
BY RICHARD R BURGESS

The F2H Banshee was a contemporary of the F9F Panther on US Navy aircraft carrier decks during the Korean War. Although it served with fewer units in the three-year conflict, as author Richard R Burgess explains, the jet was considered superior to the F9F in many respects thanks to its high-altitude capabilities, radar and nuclear weapon capability. The F2H's fascinating service career is chronicled in this volume through first-hand accounts, more than 50 photographs and 30 profile artworks.

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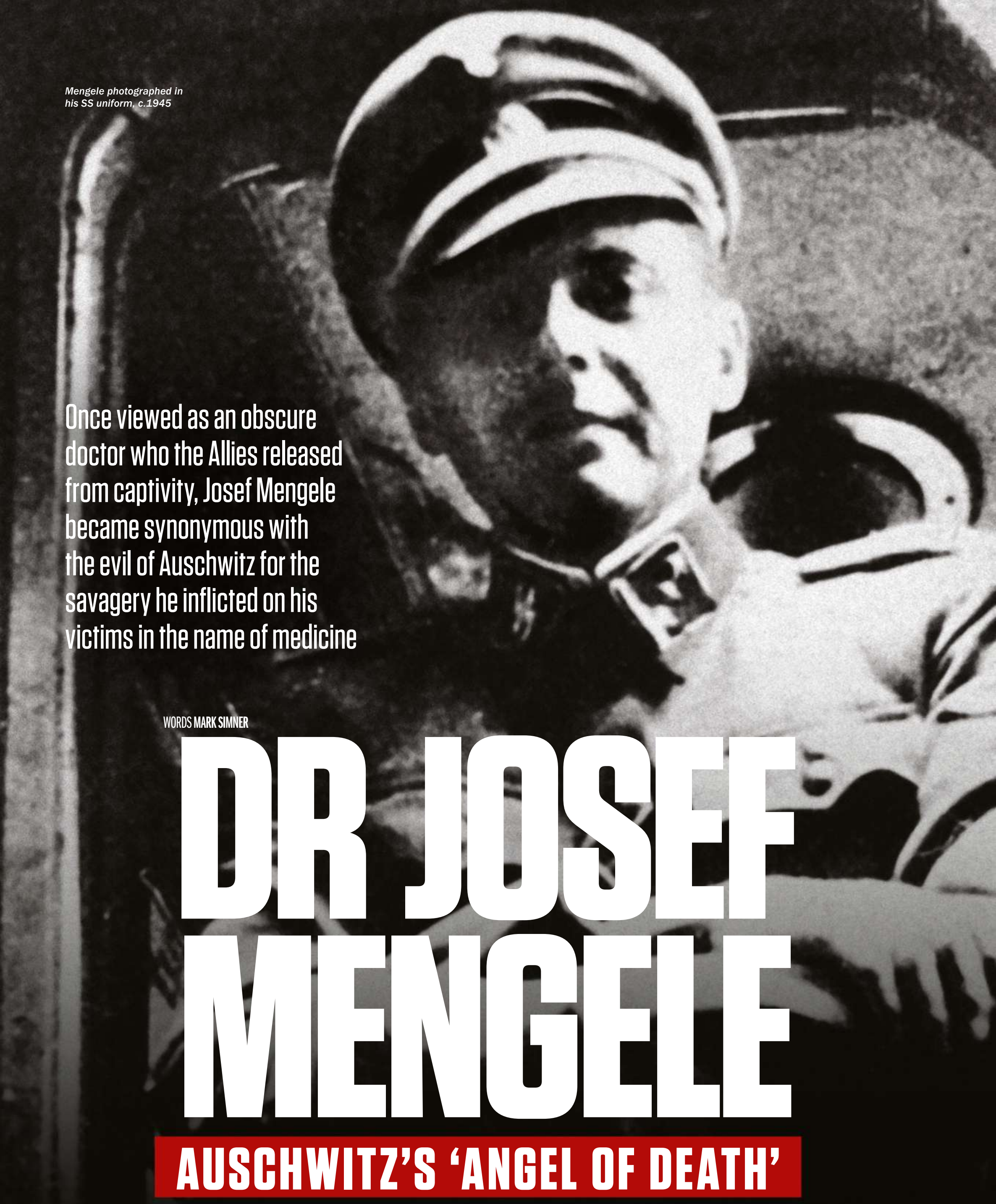


Mengele photographed in his SS uniform, c.1945

Once viewed as an obscure doctor who the Allies released from captivity, Josef Mengele became synonymous with the evil of Auschwitz for the savagery he inflicted on his victims in the name of medicine

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

DR JOSEF MENGELE

AUSCHWITZ'S 'ANGEL OF DEATH'

Images © Getty

The name Josef Mengele has become synonymous with the evil of Auschwitz. He inflicted horrific medical experiments on unwilling victims, thousands of whom perished at his hands. Yet at the end of World War II the Allies failed to realise who this obscure sadist was and even let him go. When his crimes became known, a frantic manhunt commenced, but Mengele evaded his pursuers until his death in 1979.

Early life

Born in 1911 in Günzburg, Germany, Mengele was the eldest of three sons to Karl and Walburga Mengele. Mengele senior ran a business called Firma Karl Mengele & Söhne, which produced agricultural machinery. It was a business that proved prosperous for the Mengele family.

Mengele studied philosophy in Munich in the 1920s, where he came under the influence of Alfred Rosenberg, a racial theorist and ideologue who would himself later serve the Nazis. Mengele gained a PhD in anthropology at the University of Munich in 1935.

Following his PhD, Mengele worked at the Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt, where he came under the influence of another notorious German scientist called Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, a geneticist who researched twins. Gerald Posner and John Ware, in their book *Mengele: The Complete Story*, describe Verschuer as "an outspoken admirer of Adolf Hitler, whom he considered the first statesmen to recognize the true importance of hereditary biological and race hygiene".

While working for Verschuer, Mengele studied genetics linked to conditions of the cleft lip and the cleft palate. In 1938, his work earned him a cum laude doctorate in medicine from the University of Frankfurt. Verschuer praised Mengele in an article for the *Journal for Human Heredity and Constitution Theory*. As David Marwell writes in *Mengele: Unmasking the "Angel of Death"*: "In an article reviewing the accomplishments of the institute during its first four years, Verschuer chose to single out Mengele's dissertation as having gone beyond the work of others."

Mengele married Irene Schönbein in 1939. The two had met in Leipzig and would go on to have a son in 1944. Even in marriage racial purity was on Mengele's mind. As Marwell notes: "While Mengele was receiving military training in the Tyrol in the fall of 1938, Irene took the first steps necessary to become his bride. She requested the requisite forms to initiate the review of her family history and of her own physical and racial suitability."

Mengele had joined the Nazi party in 1937, and the following year he joined the SS. Weeks after the German invasion of France he was called up for military service, but he volunteered to serve in the Waffen-SS as an SS-Untersturmführer (Second Lieutenant) in a medical reserve battalion. However, by November he had been transferred to the SS Race and Settlement Main Office in Poznan, where he worked on evaluating suitable candidates for Germanisation.

In June the following year Mengele was in Ukraine, where he would be awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class for bravery in combat. The award of the Iron Cross 1st Class came the following year when, having been posted to the 5. SS-Panzerdivision Wiking, he saved the lives of fellow soldiers from a burning tank.

Having suffered a serious wound in 1942, Mengele was declared unfit for frontline service and transferred back to the SS Race and Settlement Main Office in Berlin. It was here that he again worked with Verschuer, now the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. Still a member of the Waffen-SS, Mengele was promoted to SS-Hauptsturmführer (Captain) in April 1943.

Mengele would transfer again at the urging of Verschuer. This time he would work somewhere to which his name has become so infamously linked: Auschwitz.

Auschwitz

Mengele stood out at Auschwitz. As Posner and Ware write: "He immediately set himself apart from the other SS doctors. He was the only camp doctor to have served on the Eastern Front and to have been awarded the Iron Cross… Dr Hans Münch… who became a close friend of Mengele's, remembers that Mengele was enormously proud of his medals and wore them prominently displayed on his uniform… he quickly developed a special aura in the camp because of his front-line fighting, which contrasted sharply with the desk careers of the other camp doctors."

He was appointed chief physician of the Zigeunerfamilienlager, a sub-camp reserved for Romani families. Mengele would make visits to the hospital barracks as part of his weekly routine, and any prisoners found not to have recovered within a couple of weeks were murdered in the gas chambers.

Another duty that Mengele took to with brutal efficiency was the selections following the arrival of fresh prisoner transports. According to Posner and Ware: "Josef Mengele had become the surviving symbol of Hitler's 'Final Solution,' the incarnation of its monstrosity – cool, detached, and always immaculately prepared for the long-drawn-out rituals of death, the hellish selections which the young SS doctor so regularly attended during his twenty-one months at the Auschwitz concentration camp."

Mengele was always on the lookout for twins for his horrific experiments. It is said he often appeared happy, smiling and whistling when carrying out the abhorrent

At Auschwitz Mengele would give his younger victims sweets to gain their trust before experimenting on them

task of selecting who was to temporarily live and who was to immediately die. Mengele even supervised the application of Zyklon B, used to kill those herded into the gas chambers.

As Marwell writes: “Auschwitz provided access to unprecedented resources for all the research areas of interest to Mengele. The sheer number of people who came through the camp ensured that a robust sample of human beings, with the full range of human traits, was available.”

An example of Mengele’s work can be seen in the 1943 outbreak of noma in the Romani camp. Mengele was resolved on finding a cure for the aggressive infection. There was, of course, little interest in helping the prisoners, rather the challenge of finding a treatment was the goal. Mengele had several children suffering from the disease murdered, after which their heads and organs were sent to the SS Medical Academy in Graz and other facilities for further research.

In his book *The Holocaust*, Laurence Rees recalls the words of Wilhelm Brasse, a prisoner forced to take photographs for Mengele: “He [Mengele] explained to me he would send from the Gypsy camp a case of water cancer [noma]… They sent a young Gypsy who had the cancer… on his face, you could see the whole jaw, you could see the bone visible, and he [Mengele] explained to me it must be photographed from profile so the bone would be visible… These things are constantly before my eyes. After the war I had recurring dreams, either of someone brought from Dr Mengele or they’re looking for me, taking me to be shot.”

Another example includes a typhus epidemic, which infected the women’s camp. To rid the camp of the disease, Mengele ordered inmates from entire blocks to be gassed, after which the blocks were disinfected before being refilled with other inmates. The process was repeated until the camp was deemed disinfected. When other epidemics broke out, Mengele repeated the murderous procedure.

Human experimentation

Mengele took advantage of his position at Auschwitz to perform experiments on humans. His main interest lay in twins, no doubt a result of his earlier work with Verschuer. Unsurprisingly, Mengele’s research into twins was performed in the context of the supposed ‘genetic superiority’ of the Aryan race, which was so central to Nazi ideology. He also sought prisoners who had heterochromia iridum (a person with different coloured eyes) and others with physical abnormalities.

Verschuer continued to support Mengele’s work, obtaining financial donations from the German Research Foundation, the money being used to establish a pathology laboratory at Auschwitz. In return, Mengele would send Verschuer updates of his work and findings, along with specimens and other samples from those he murdered.

Mengele kept those he experimented on in a separate barracks. They were treated marginally better than other inmates, being better fed. However, this was to aid Mengele’s work, not his victims. Rather sadistically, he would often meet his younger victims with sweets and referred to himself as Uncle Mengele.

Auschwitz survivor Otto Rosenberg wrote in *A Gypsy in Auschwitz*: “Whenever word got around that Dr Mengele was in the camp, the children would run to meet him. He would take them by the hand and walk them round behind the sauna, where the infirmary lay.” Moments later, the children would endure Mengele’s barbarity, undergoing experiments or receiving lethal injections.

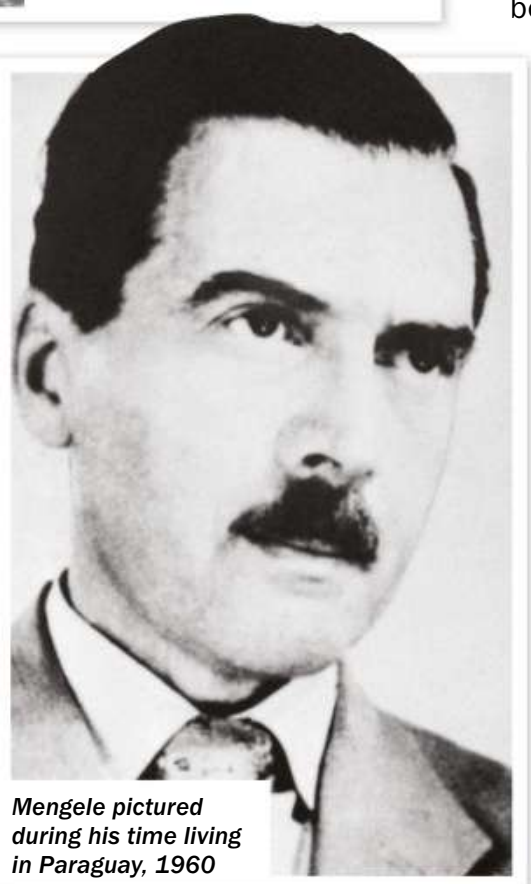
In *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the ‘Final Solution’*, Rees recalls one example of Mengele’s ‘schizophrenic nature’. He quotes Vera Alexander, a Czechoslovakian inmate who was the kapo of a block that contained gypsy and Polish children: “Mengele used to come to the camp every day – he used

The surviving infirmary and surgery building at Auschwitz, pictured in 1998

The Ovitz family survived Mengele’s experiments on them in Auschwitz

Mengele would select victims for his experiments from the new arrivals at Auschwitz

L-R: Richard Baer (commandant of Auschwitz), Josef Mengele and Rudolf Höss (former Auschwitz commandant), pictured in 1944



Mengele pictured during his time living in Paraguay, 1960

"TWINS WERE INTENTIONALLY INFECTED WITH DEADLY DISEASES. MENGELE EVEN CARRIED OUT UNNECESSARY AMPUTATIONS"

to bring chocolate… When I shouted and told the children off, they usually reacted, 'We will tell Uncle you are bad.' Mengele was the 'Good Uncle'. But, of course, Mengele behaved in this way for a reason: these children were nothing to him but the raw material for his experiments."

Auschwitz survivor Eva Mozes Kor, in her book *The Twins of Auschwitz*, recalls a moment she saw Mengele enter her barracks: "He was dressed elegantly in an SS uniform and tall, shiny black riding boots. He wore white gloves and carried a baton. My first thought was how handsome he was, like a movie star. He strode through the barracks, counting twins at every bunk."

Twins selected by Mengele were forced to endure painful medical procedures. These included being intentionally infected with deadly diseases such as typhus or undergoing dangerous blood transfusions from one twin to the other. Mengele even carried out unnecessary amputations. Many died, which merely presented him with an opportunity to dissect and study their corpses. It is said that should one twin die he would murder the other to compare post-mortems.

A type of human experiment Mengele also became notorious for was his attempt to change the colour of people's eyes. He would inject chemicals into the eyes of his victims while they were still alive. Others, with heterochromatic eyes, he had murdered so he could remove them for further study.

Escape from justice

Mengele transferred to Gross-Rosen in mid-January 1945; the following month he fled from the advancing Soviets. In the dying days of the Third Reich he attempted to disguise his identity, changing uniform and heading to Czechoslovakia, but by June he was a prisoner of the Allies. However, the American military authorities failed to identify him and let him go. As Rees writes: "In Mengele's case the lack of an SS blood group tattoo under his arm meant he was never identified as SS."

Nevertheless, Mengele knew it was only a matter of time before his crimes would be detected and he obtained false papers under the name of Fritz Ulmann. After spending time working on a farm, he left Germany in April 1949.

As Guy Walters writes in his book *Hunting Evil*: "In his 'autobiography', Mengele devoted much space to justifying his actions, but he now knew that to attempt to do so at an Allied tribunal would be to risk a trip to the gallows. Only one option was available, and that was to emigrate to Argentina." With the assistance of former SS men, he travelled to Genoa and obtained a passport under the name of Helmut Gregor. By July he was in Argentina.

In Buenos Aires Mengele worked as a carpenter before becoming a salesman for his family's company. It is believed he may have continued to practise unlicenced medicine, performing abortions for money. So comfortable did Mengele become in Argentina that he reverted to using his real name and obtained a West German passport. Visits to Europe were made in the 1950s, even returning to his hometown.

Irene refused to follow her husband to South America. According to Posner and Ware: "They grew apart by the postwar separation. When she visited him at Auschwitz, husband and wife adopted a 'don't ask, don't tell' attitude, and Irene sought happiness elsewhere during the years of his hiding." She would later seek a divorce.

Mengele visited Switzerland for a skiing holiday with his sister-in-law Martha, now a widow. Martha and her son Karl later joined him in Argentina, where they lived together. Now divorced, Mengele married Martha in 1958 and bought a house in Buenos Aires.

The same year, Mengele was questioned by police following the death of a teenage girl, who died after an illegal abortion. Nothing came of the questioning but Mengele worried it might lead to others investigating his past. He went to Paraguay, obtaining citizenship under the name José Mengele. By 1960, Martha and her son had left Argentina and returned to West Germany.

Although Mengele had been identified at the Nuremberg Trials by Rudolf Höss, the former commandant of Auschwitz, the Allied military authorities had presumed he was likely deceased. Nevertheless, other Nazi hunters later discovered Mengele's divorce papers, which showed he was living in Buenos Aires. An arrest warrant was issued in June 1959 by the West German authorities but the Argentine government initially refused extradition. By the time they agreed, Mengele was in Paraguay.

Hunted by Mossad

Following their capture of Adolf Eichmann in May 1960, Mossad turned its attention to Mengele. Eichmann provided Israeli intelligence with the location of a safe house used by former Nazis. Further investigation revealed Mengele had previously been there but had moved on. Despite their efforts, Mossad was unable to locate him.

The West German government offered a reward for the capture of Mengele, and stories of his wartime activities began to circulate. This increased publicity forced him to relocate to Brazil where, in 1962, he co-bought a coffee and cattle farm in Serra Negra with two Hungarian expatriates. The Hungarians, Géza and Gitta Stammer, did not initially know Mengele's real identity but later found out. However, they were persuaded to not report him by Wolfgang Gerhard, a Nazi sympathiser who had assisted Mengele's move to Brazil.

Mossad continued their hunt, and a potential breakthrough came in 1962 when they tracked Gerhard to a farm near São Paulo. Mengele had briefly stayed at the farm with Gerhard before crossing into Brazil. Mossad believed they had found their target but lack of funds and Mossad's need to focus on issues with Egypt prevented further action.

Death

Mengele bought a farmhouse in Caieiras with the Stammers in 1969, but their relationship with him deteriorated in the 1970s. Also deteriorating was Mengele's health and he suffered a stroke in 1976. In February 1979, he had another while swimming at the coastal resort of Bertioga and drowned. By this time, Mengele had been using the identity of Wolfgang Gerhard and was buried under that name in Embu das Artes.

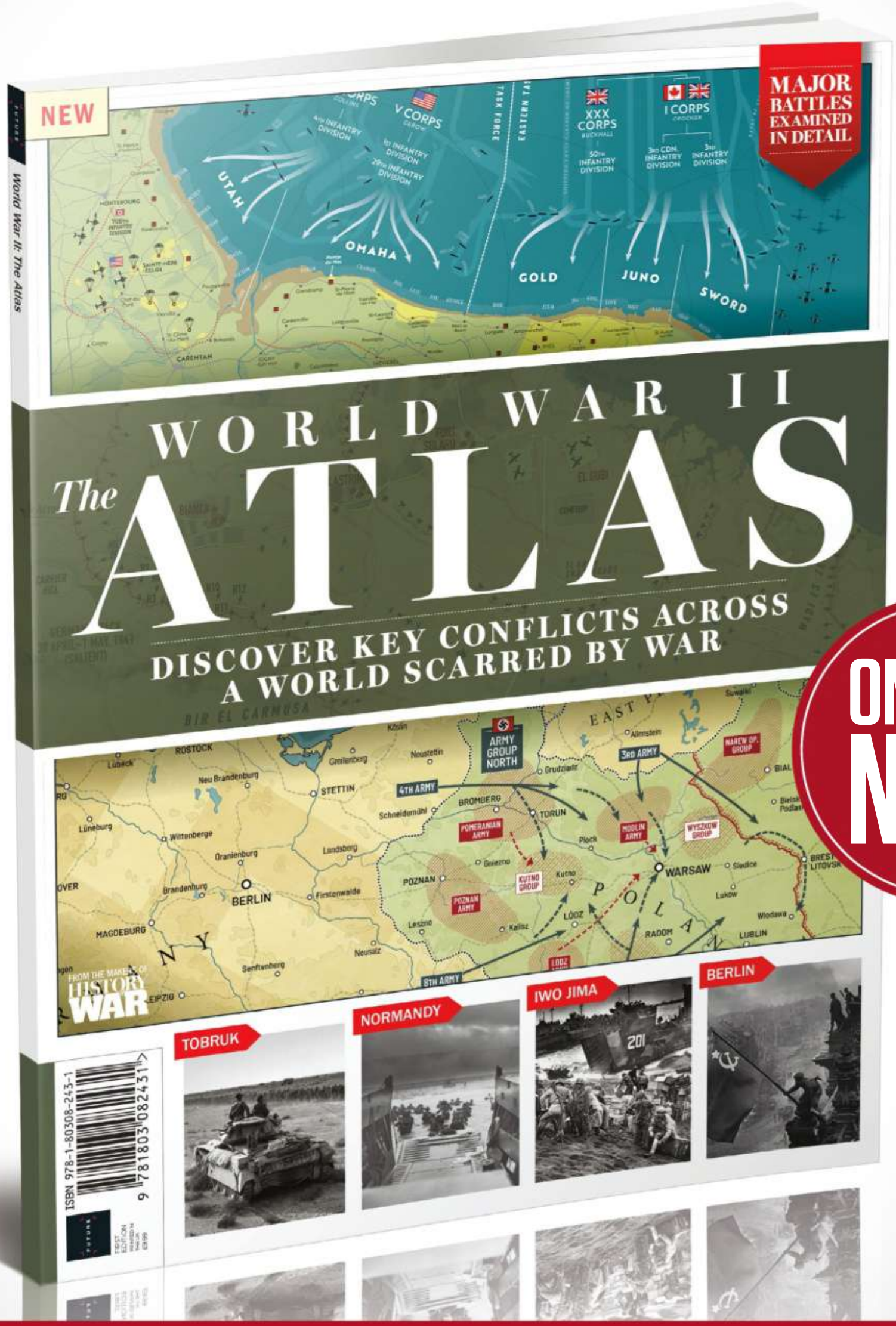
His death remained unknown for years. Further investigations were made by US, West German and Israeli authorities, and in 1985 it was discovered that he had died and was buried under his alias. The body was exhumed but it was not until 1992 that DNA testing confirmed the body was that of Mengele.

Walters sums up Mengele and his abhorrent legacy: "Numerous testimonies gathered by the Allies revealed that a hitherto obscure doctor was actually a sadist of the highest order, and a sadist who inflicted the utmost savageries in the name of science. As one report was to put it years later, Mengele 'became synonymous with the evil of Auschwitz, the site on which more people were murdered than any other in recorded human history'."

Images © Getty

REWIND THE CLOCK AND EXPLORE A WORLD AT WAR

In this special edition bookazine from the makers of *History Of War*, explore the defining battles of the Second World War in detail, discover how pivotal leaders led their armies into fierce conflicts and much more



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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover Ancient Rome's connection to Tyneside, County Down's tribute to the Battle of the Somme and Halloween at ghostly Kenilworth Castle

Kenilworth Castle's reflection pictured in autumn on the remains of the Mere – its huge medieval defensive lake

The castle has Halloween events tailored for both children and adults in October 2022

Halloween at Kenilworth

Warwickshire's large romantic ruin has a decidedly spooky history that is being harnessed for All Hallows' Eve

Built in the early 1120s by Geoffrey de Clinton, lord chamberlain and treasurer to King Henry I, Kenilworth Castle has a fascinating history. Extensively fortified by King John in the early 13th century, it endured England's longest siege during June-December 1266. It later became a royal palace and was a favourite destination for monarchs such as Henry V, Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I.

Partially destroyed by Parliamentary forces in 1649 after the execution of Charles I, Kenilworth slowly turned into a romantic ruin. Now the largest ruined castle in England by area, it has accumulated a ghostly reputation over its 900-year history. It is managed by English Heritage, whose staff have voted it one of the spookiest sites they look after. Pipped to the top position only by Bolsover Castle in Derbyshire, Kenilworth is reported to contain ghostly figures including a monk who has been seen by many members of staff. There have also been reports of an antique cot that rocks by itself and a strange smell of pipe smoke.

None of these stories can be verified but Kenilworth's haunted reputation will play a large part in its Halloween events this year. Between Saturday 22nd to Sunday 30th October, the castle will host its annual Halloween Half Term event. Running from 10am to 5pm each day, parents can take their young children to solve creepy clues on a fun quest around the castle grounds. They can also meet costumed performers to hear tales of the strange, supernatural and downright silly. Tickets for this event are cheaper when booked in advance, and entry is free for English Heritage members.

There are also separate ghost tours for adults during Thursday 27th to Monday 31st October that run in the evening. Suitable for those aged 16 and over, visitors can explore the castle in the dark as storytellers tell tales of ghosts, supernatural sightings and horrors from history. Each tour lasts around 45 minutes in an outdoor setting, with guests being advised to bring a torch and wear suitable clothes and shoes.

Standard tickets for the ghost tours are £18 per adult, while English Heritage members pay a discounted rate of £14. Like Halloween Half Term, the tours are very popular and pre-booking is strongly advised. During 27-31 October, the evening tours run at 6pm, 6.30pm, 7pm, 7.30pm, 8pm and 8.30pm. Tickets for these times can be booked online.

For more information about both events and to book tickets visit: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Ireland and the Somme

The Somme Heritage Centre tells the story of Irish soldiers who fought in the British Army's bloodiest battle

The Somme Association is a registered charity that coordinates research into Ireland's part in the First World War. It aims to ensure that the sacrifices of all those from Ireland who served in the conflict – and those of their families – continue to be honoured and remembered.

The association owns the Somme Heritage Centre in County Down, Northern Ireland. The centre is an institution for the study and interpretation of Ireland's war experience, with a particular reference to the Battle of the Somme. Commemorating the involvement of the 36th (Ulster), 16th (Irish) and 10th (Irish) Divisions in the British Army, it provides exhibitions, displays and information. The centre was built on the site where soldiers of 108th Brigade, Ulster Division trained at the outbreak of war in 1914 and it has an extensive collection of material from WWI. There is also a growing collection from WWII and other modern international conflicts.

The centre has reconstructed WWI trenches and provides guided tours for groups and schools. Each tour lasts one hour, with time to discover other exhibitions in the museum. Temporary exhibitions include Women and the First World War, D-Day Voices and None That Go Return Again-The Armistice & The Aftermath. Its educational programme for primary and secondary schools also includes a hands-on session with staff who have received autism awareness training.

For more information visit: www.sommeassociation.com

Soldiers from the Royal Irish Rifles were famously photographed resting during the opening hours of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916

The Somme Heritage Centre is located in between the towns of Bangor and Newtownards in County Down

Segedunum

This Roman fort defended the eastern edge of Hadrian's Wall for 300 years and is now a museum with fascinating collections and reconstructions

Located in what is now Wallsend, North Tyneside, Segedunum was a Roman fort that lay at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall near the banks of the River Tyne. From 122 CE to almost 400 CE it was in use as a garrison. Units of 600 soldiers – both infantry and cavalry – were based at the fort until it was abandoned towards the end of Roman rule in Britain.

It is now the most excavated fort along Hadrian's Wall, with surviving foundations of many buildings and part of the wall itself. At the site there is a large interactive museum plus full-scale reconstructions of a bath house and a section of the wall. There is also a 35-metre-high viewing tower that provides outstanding views across this World Heritage Site.

The museum contains extensive Roman archaeological finds from Segedunum that represent a comprehensive span of its 300-year occupation. Items include surviving spearheads, sections of ring mail armour and a collection of rounded throwing stones that were used as defensive missiles for the fort. There is even a portable shrine and the only surviving stone toilet seat from Roman Britain.

During 26 September to 3 December, Segedunum is open 10am-3am and closed on Sundays. With a winter closure from 4 December to 8 January, it reopens on 9 January 2023.

For more information visit: www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk

A metal statue of Sentius Tectonicus, a centurion whose name comes from an inscription recovered close to Segedunum of a real centurion called Sentius who helped build a nearby section of Hadrian's Wall

All images © Alamy

WWII THIS MONTH...

OCTOBER 1942

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

BATTLE OF THE SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS

Fought off the Santa Cruz Islands, this engagement was the fourth aircraft carrier battle of the Pacific War. To assist a new Japanese offensive on Guadalcanal, the Imperial Japanese Navy had moved carriers and large warships near to the southern Solomon Islands. During 25-27 October 1942, outnumbered US Navy forces fought the Japanese in a battle that resulted in heavy material losses. The American aircraft carrier USS Hornet was sunk along with a destroyer and their other carrier, USS Enterprise, was heavily damaged. The Japanese suffered high aircraft losses and two Japanese carriers received significant damage, although neither were sunk.

Santa Cruz was a Japanese victory that enabled them to temporarily take control of the seas around Guadalcanal. Nevertheless, their loss of many experienced aircrew put them at a disadvantage in the long-term.

Images © Alamy, Getty

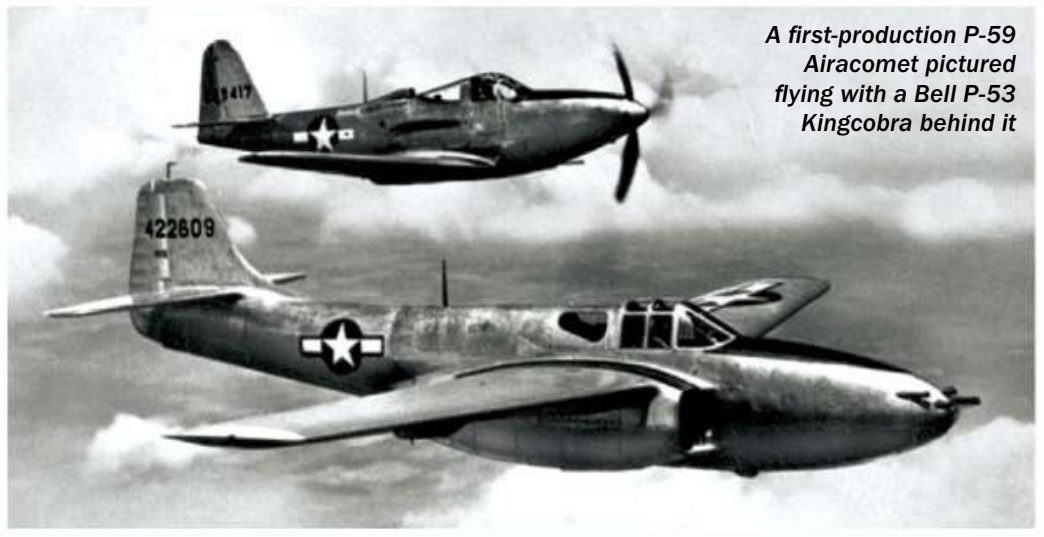
US Marines patrol across the Matanikau River

MATANIKAU AND HENDERSON FIELD

During October 1942, American forces on Guadalcanal won two victories against the Japanese. The Third Battle of the Matanikau saw a Japanese battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment being trapped in a wooded ravine by US Marines. Fought during 7-9 October, the Japanese battalion suffered heavy casualties and were forced to retreat from their positions east of the Matanikau River.

This defeat had an effect on Japanese preparations to retake the strategically important airfield of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. During the Battle of Henderson Field of 23-26 October, 20,000 Japanese soldiers failed to break through the American defences and suffered c.2,200-3,000 killed and a sunken cruiser. Henderson Field was the last serious ground offensive on Guadalcanal, with the Japanese evacuating by February 1943.

USS Enterprise and other American ships pictured in action with anti-aircraft fire filling the sky, 26 October 1942



A first-production P-59 Airacomet pictured flying with a Bell P-53 Kingcobra behind it

AMERICA'S FIRST JET

The Bell P-59 Airacomet was the United States' first jet fighter aircraft. A single-seat aeroplane, the P-59 was powered by two General Electric J31 turbojet engines and could be armed with autocannons or heavy machine guns.

It took its first flight on 1 October 1942 at Muroc Army Air Field in California but its performance was unimpressive. Numerous tests uncovered poor engine responses and stability problems during rolls. One P-59 was supplied to the Royal Air Force but the British encountered similar issues and preferred their own Gloster Meteor jet.

Only 66 P-59s were produced, with none entering combat during WWII. The Americans instead chose the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star as their first operational jet aircraft but it did not see action until the Korean War.

THE COMMANDO ORDER

Issued by the OKW – the high command of the German armed forces – on 18 October 1942, the Kommandobefehl ('Commando Order') was a draconian measure against Allied special forces personnel. It stated that all Allied commandos who were captured in Europe or Africa should be immediately killed without trial – even if they attempted to surrender or were wearing military uniforms.

Authorised by Adolf Hitler, the Order was issued in response to a British commando raid on the Channel Island of Sark. German soldiers had died after surrendering, with Hitler claiming this was a breach of the Geneva Convention. However, the Kommandobefehl contravened the Convention and was therefore illegal.

Captured Allied commandos were killed until the end of the war, and German officers were convicted at the Nuremberg Trials for carrying out the Order.

British commandos look out for snipers in Osnabrück, Germany, April 1945

Over 3,000 V-2 rockets were launched against Allied targets from September 1944, killing c.9,000 civilians and military personnel. Twelve-thousand forced labourers also died during their production

LAUNCH OF THE V-2

On 3 October 1942, the first V-2 rocket was successfully launched from Test Stand VII at Peenemünde on the German Baltic island of Usedom. A two-ton liquid-propellant rocket, the V-2 was the world's first long-range guided ballistic missile. Designed by Wernher von Braun and given the technical name of Aggregat 4 (A4), the rocket was better known as the V-2 to distinguish it from its V-1 (Vengeance Weapon) predecessor.

The V-2's first flight saw it become the first man-made object to reach space when it reached an altitude of 84.5km. The leader of the V-2 rocket programme Walter Dornberger stated: "This third day of October, 1942, is the first of a new era in transportation, that of space travel."

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books

PUTIN'S WARS

FROM CHECHNYA TO UKRAINE

THIS TIMELY STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN MILITARY IN THE AGE OF VLADIMIR PUTIN COMBINES EXEMPLARY ACADEMIC RESEARCH WITH REAL-WORLD OBSERVATIONS FROM THE AUTHOR'S TIME LIVING IN RUSSIA

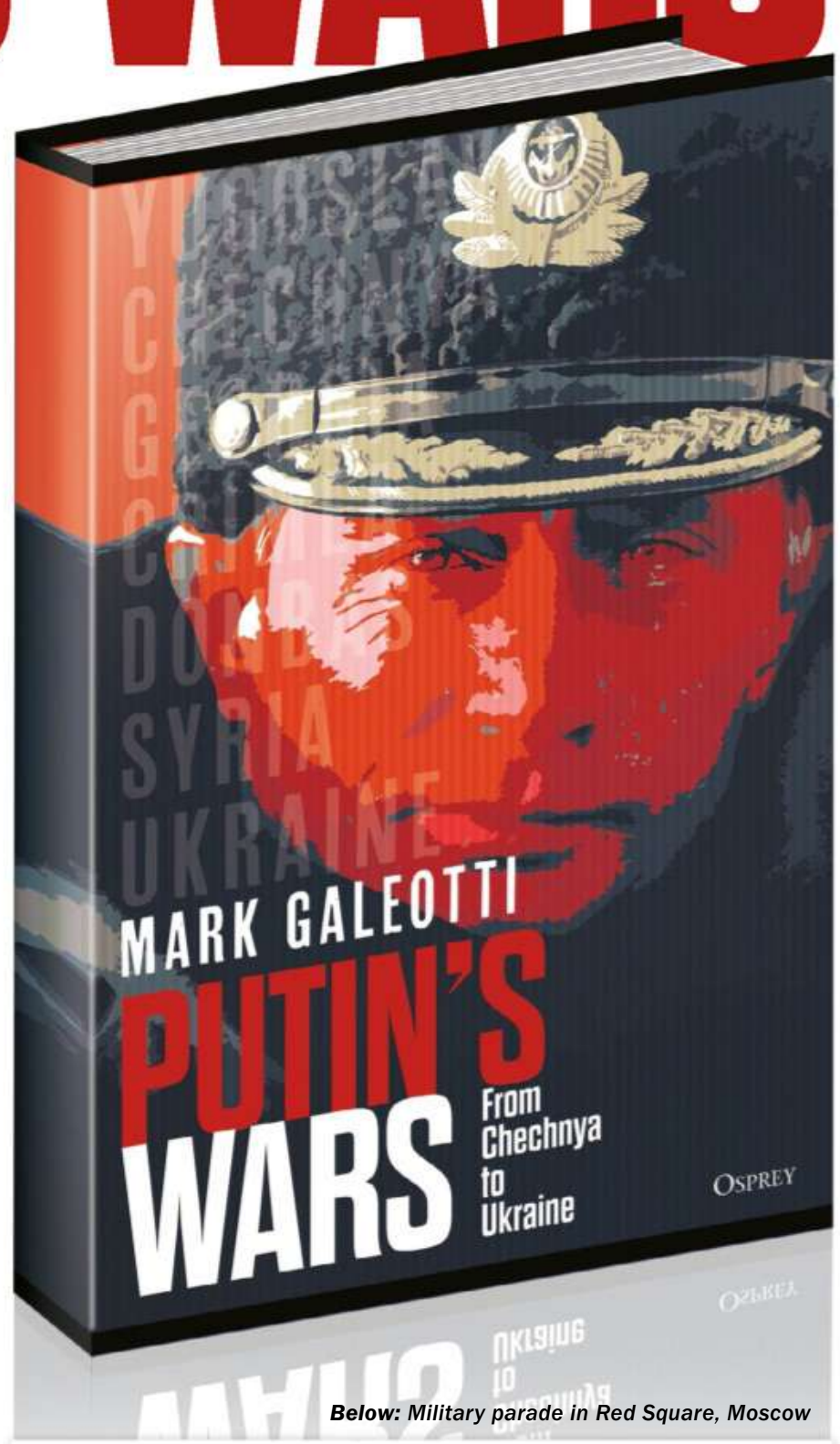
Author: Mark Galeotti **Publisher:** Osprey
Price: £25 **Released:** 10 November 2022

As well as being thoroughly researched, Mark Galeotti's latest book is rich with anecdotes about the various military personnel, advisors and diplomats he has met while living and travelling through Russia. The result is a proper page-turner that is consistently entertaining and at times even snort-out-loud funny. Not that this book is in any way a lightweight. On the contrary, the writer's depth of knowledge is remarkable, while the level of detail offered is exhaustive.

This book not only offers comprehensive coverage of the wars Russia's got itself into over the last 20-odd years, as its title suggests, but also takes a microscope to the Russian military itself. We get whole chapters on its evolution, reform and modernisation under Putin's successive defence ministers. We also get deep dives into each branch of its services, which examine everything from their command structures and weaponry to funding and recruitment. And along the way, we get an array of fascinating facts that illustrate how far Russia's war machine has come since the Soviet era. Who knew, for example, that Russian soldiers still wrapped their feet in cloth rather

"THE WRITER'S DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE IS REMARKABLE, WHILE THE LEVEL OF DETAIL OFFERED IS EXHAUSTIVE"

***Below:** A Dagestani refugee returns home after Russian air stikes, 11 September, 1999*



***Below:** Military parade in Red Square, Moscow*

than socks until 2013? Or that propaganda text messages could be sent en masse across the battlefield to the smartphones of enemy combatants? Or that some Russian submarines have saunas onboard?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the book really comes into its own when it examines the various wars Russia has fought in Chechnya, Georgia, Crimea and beyond. It explores not only the various intrigues and machinations that created those conflicts but also provides blow-by-blow accounts of their most significant engagements. Its chapters on Syria are particularly good, managing to untangle an imbroglio that must surely be as confusing as any in human history.

Where the book is slightly less successful, perhaps, is in its assessment of recent events in Ukraine. Throughout, Putin is portrayed as a canny, if ruthless, leader motivated by a blend of hard-headed nationalism, political pragmatism and plain old egotism. Defending Russia's borders from what he perceives as the very real threat of NATO's creeping advance eastward is clearly important to him. As is his desire to be remembered by history as the man who challenged US hegemony and 'made Russia great again'. But why did he choose to escalate the conflict in Ukraine when he did and why was the initial invasion carried out in such a bumbling manner? The penultimate chapter, added as recently as June of this year to reflect the ongoing crisis, can do little more than offer speculation in response to these questions.

This is not to take anything away from this stunning book, which must surely count as the definitive work on this subject to date. It's merely to point out that the fog of war can be all pervasive, not least when Vladimir Putin is involved. **NS**

Soldiers and personnel carriers stationed at a checkpoint in eastern Ukraine, 3 May, 2014

HITLER'S GIRL

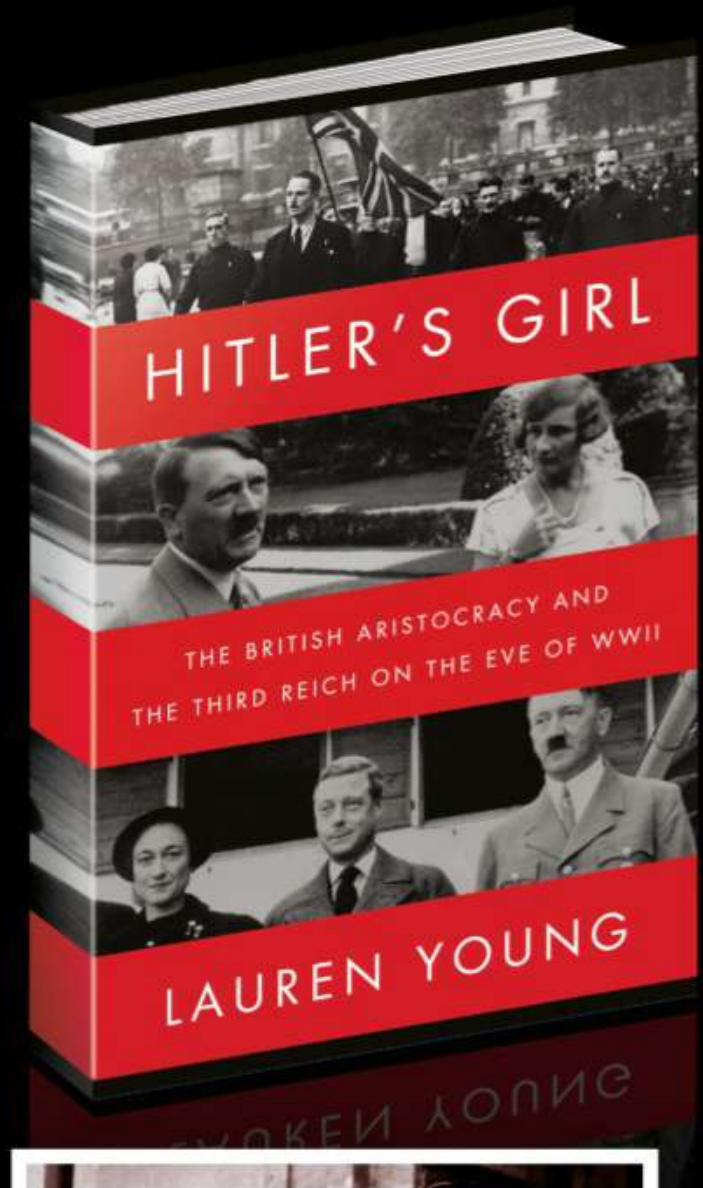
APPEASEMENT AND A GROUNDSWELL OF SUPPORT FOR HITLER AMONG THE BRITISH RULING CLASS MADE THE POTENTIAL FOR BRITAIN TO SUCCUMB TO NAZI GERMANY A REAL THREAT

Author: Lauren Young **Publisher:** Harper Collins **Price:** £22 (Hardback)

In the days leading up to the Second World War, some members of the British aristocracy made no secret of their sympathy for Nazism and its leader Adolf Hitler. One of the most notorious of these characters was the socialite Unity Mitford, sister of the novelist Nancy Mitford. Joseph Kennedy Jr, son of the American ambassador to England, wrote to his father that "she [Unity] is the most fervent Nazi imaginable and is probably in love with Hitler". Hence the title of Lauren Young's meticulously researched chronicle of the pro-German agenda pursued by extreme right wing elements in Britain. As early as spring 1938, Hitler had warned Unity to leave Germany. Instead, the day Britain declared war she put a bullet in her temple. She failed to do the job properly but died in 1948 from meningitis related to the attempted suicide.

The author highlights the alarming fact that if Britain, along with the rest of Europe, had fallen to the Nazis, approximately a quarter of the world's population would have lived under Fascist control, likely for generations. Young voices concern over the current threats to our Western liberal democratic traditions, brought to light by her investigation of declassified files.

"As I began digging through these files… what I found was not the defense of the policy of appeasement, which I expected, but a hidden history of collaboration and a newfound sense of alarm," she says. The author rolls out a rogues' gallery of turncoats, from Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists to the dark, anti-Semitic organisation Link, whose members included the Dukes of Westminster, Marlborough and Wellington. The book makes for sobering reading at a time when some Western governments play fast and loose with our time-honoured democratic traditions. **JS**



***Right:** Unity Mitford pictured with Fritz Stadelmann, Hitler's adjutant in Berlin*

Images © Alamy, Getty

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

A VISUAL HISTORY

A WELL-PRESENTED OFFERING THAT BENEFITS FULLY FROM THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM'S UNIQUE AND VAST ARCHIVE

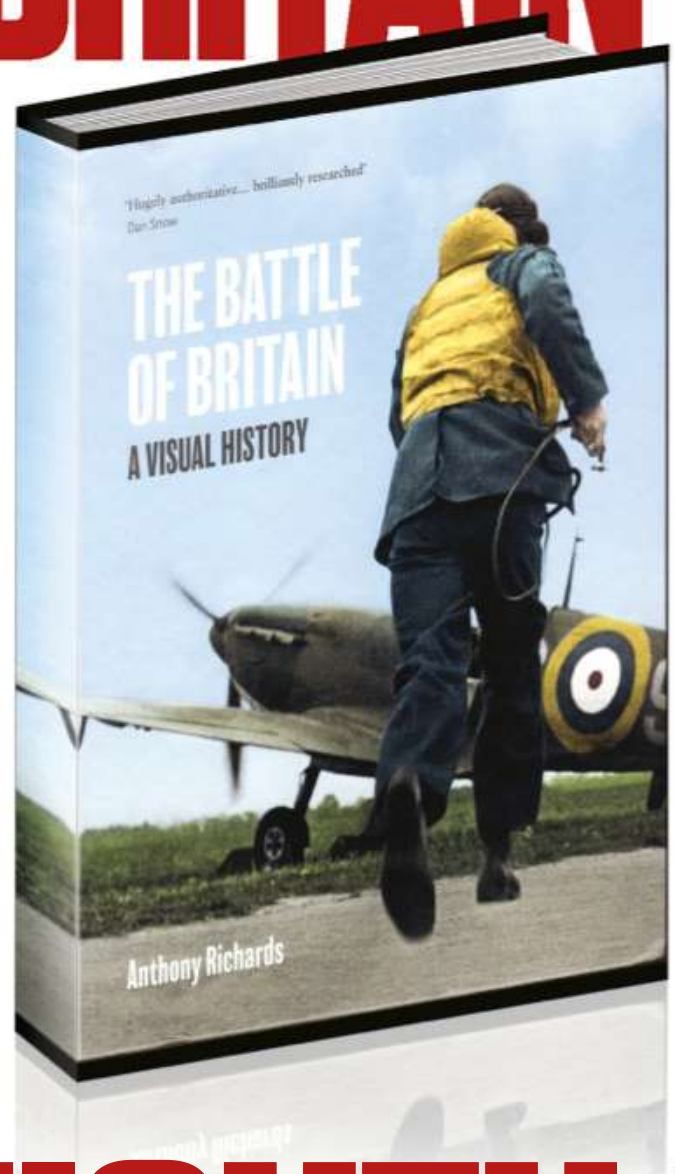
Author: Anthony Richards **Publisher:** IWM **Price:** £25

At first glance, one might be tempted to dismiss this book as just another work on the Battle of Britain. Let's face it, it is a military history topic that has seemingly spawned at least two or three titles every month for decades past in what can feel like a never-ending cycle. And this reviewer approached this title with that slightly jaded and cynical outlook. However, this book is worthy of far more than a passing glance or dismissal on the grounds that it is probably just 'more of the same'.

It's true to say there is little 'new' that can be written about the subject, but Anthony Richards has shown there are still nuggets to be found in the archives and collections of the Imperial War Museums. And as a curator at the IWM he was ideally placed to mine those nuggets.

As the title suggests, this is a pictorial presentation of the battle, and with an image selection that's second to none. While a good many of the pictures will be familiar, their large-format presentation and captioning is superb. Although there are one or two captioning errors, this does not hugely detract from an otherwise splendid publication. Particularly pleasing are pieces of artwork from the period, along with images of Battle of Britain artefacts in the IWM collections.

Altogether this is a rather lovely visual history of the Battle of Britain and at £25 it represents very good value. It is also a book this reviewer (a self-confessed aficionado of 1940) surprises himself by unexpectedly commending most highly. **AS**



"THIS IS A PICTORIAL PRESENTATION OF THE BATTLE, AND WITH AN IMAGE SELECTION SECOND TO NONE"

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

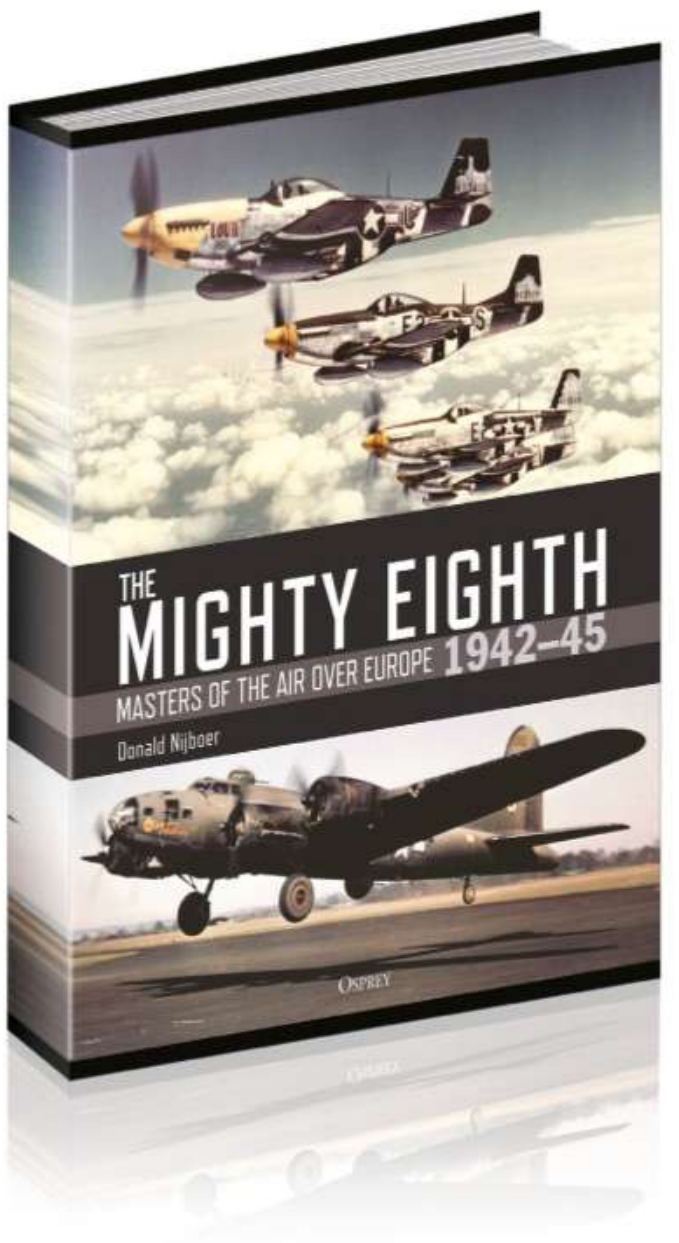
LEARN ABOUT THE US AIRMEN AND MACHINES WHO PUMMELLED NAZI GERMANY FROM THE AIR

Author: Donald Nijboer **Publisher:** Osprey **Price:** £30

The United States Army Air Force's 8th Air Force was activated in early 1942, deploying to the United Kingdom later that year to be the tip of the American spear in the war with Germany. Its bomber command began to operate in increasing numbers in the daylight skies over Germany and occupied Europe. Despite appalling loses they were instrumental in crippling the German war economy and air force over the next three years, and setting the preconditions for the liberation of western Europe and the overthrow of Nazism. It grew into a vast and complicated organisation in the air and on the ground.

Nijboer provides a sweeping introduction to the 'Mighty Eighth''s bomber and fighter forces in over 300 pages. By breaking down the subject into themes, his flowing prose leads the reader through all aspects of the 8th: the day-to-day life of the personnel, the development and achievements of the campaign, the organisation of the 8th in the air and on the ground, the technical specifications and development of the aircraft, tactics and operations, the experience of battle, and finally brief biographies of some of the key personnel. Each section provides a capsule introduction into the subject, providing an excellent handbook for the air force, its aircraft, operations and personnel. Although necessarily only an overview, each section gets to the heart of the matter at hand, supported by first-hand accounts and, as expected from Osprey, lavish illustrations including contemporary photographs, diagrams, technical cut-aways and dramatic new artwork. **SH**

B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers over Dayton, Ohio, 8 February 1939



A VILLAGE IN THE THIRD REICH

***Above:** View of the Oberstdorf church with the Alps in the background*

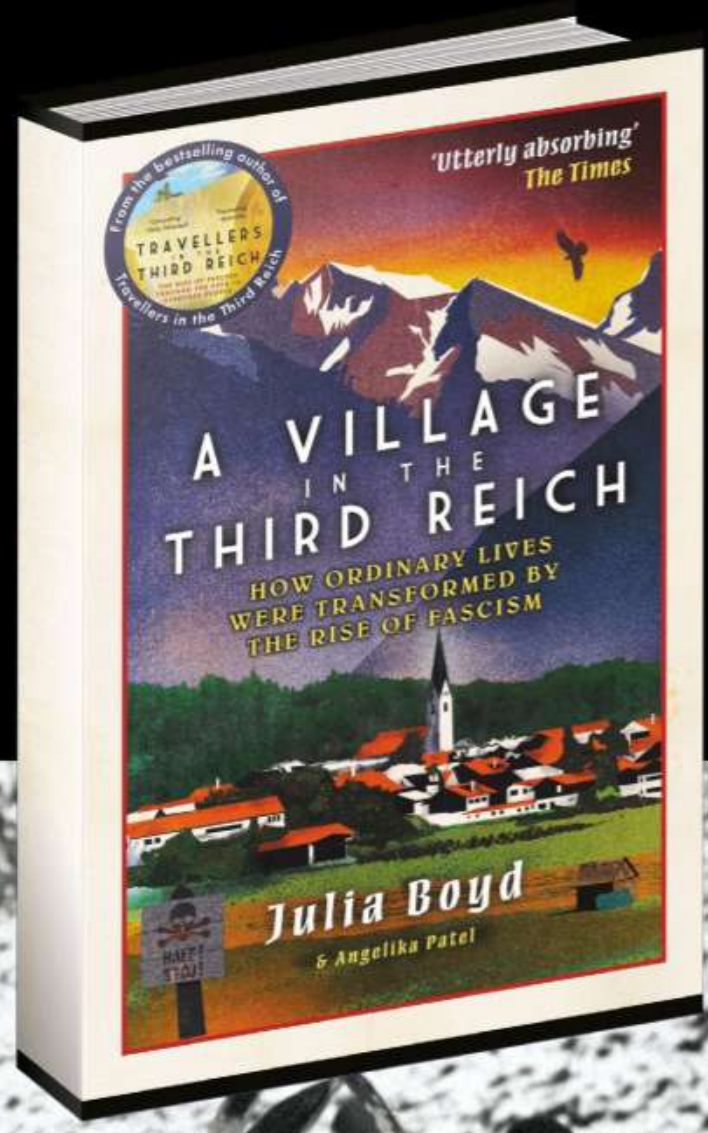
JOURNEY BACK IN TIME TO WITNESS LIFE IN A BAVARIAN VILLAGE UNDER THE THIRD REICH

Authors: Julia Boyd and Angelika Patel
Publisher: Elliott & Thompson Limited **Price:** £10.99

A Village in the Third Reich, by Julia Boyd and Angelika Patel, takes readers back in time to the village of Oberstdorf, high in the Bavarian Alps. It is from this seemingly distant place that we watch the rise of National Socialism and come to see the impact it had on even the most distant parts of Germany. From hopeful beginnings to the shattering final days of the war, this is a story of ordinary people in an extraordinary situation.

By not situating the book in the political heart of the Third Reich, Boyd and Patel bring a new perspective to a well-represented field. It introduces readers to a varied cast of characters and the events that led Germany along the path to the Second World War, following its cast to the bitter end and beyond. What stands out in these stories is the change that overcomes the village and its inhabitants as the war progresses, through the eyes of those who both support or oppose Nazism and the conflict. It is precisely because this is such a normal setting that it is easy to imagine oneself in this anything-but-normal situation, and ask what we would have done faced with such circumstances.

A Village in the Third Reich draws heavily on archive material, including letters and memoirs, to examine life under the Third Reich. It is incredibly engaging and will no doubt appeal to an extremely wide range of readers, who will find this book as compelling as it is evocative. **CC**


'Utterly absorbing'
The Times
From the bestselling author of
TRAVELLERS IN THE THIRD REICH
Travellers in the Third Reich
A VILLAGE IN THE THIRD REICH
HOW ORDINARY LIVES WERE TRANSFORMED BY THE RISE OF FASCISM
Julia Boyd
& Angelika Patel

***Below:** Schoolchildren getting ready to take part in a skiing competition in Oberstdorf, Germany, 1931*

Images © Getty

CENTENNIAL

Over eight years in the making, this new book provides a rich visual chronicle for each year of the Great War, with stunning photography of centennial commemorations and living history events around the world

It may seem like only yesterday that the world was marking 100 years since World War I – anniversaries for some of the bloodiest and most tragic events in the history of human conflict. This 100-year milestone added extra poignancy to annual commemorations and battlefield reenactments all over the world. With *In the Centennial Footsteps of the Great War*, former president of the Budapest Stock Exchange turned author and historian, Attila Szalay-Berzeviczy, recounts the story of the conflict through his own travels and photography.

This first 410-page volume (the second being 600 pages) meticulously chronicles every major battle and event during the first two years of the war, from the Serbian Campaign to the operations in Mesopotamia. The sheer scale of this project becomes apparent with every turn of the page, and the author's travels have left no corner of the global war unchecked. Broadly organised chronologically, the reader is treated to a new spread of vivid photographs from the author's visits to commemorative events and living history displays. Also included are sections covering topics such as Women in the Great War, and the War at Sea.

Alongside each photo display is thoroughly informative explanatory text, describing each event or battlefield as well as the specific centenary event pictured. These detailed histories have been provided with the assistance of Drs Spencer Jones and Ignác Romsics. In addition, £2 is being donated to the Western Front Association for every book sold in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. For more information on the book, visit: **www.greatwarbook.com**

***Above:** "The events of 1914-18 and the sacrifices made by our forebears a century ago should always be remembered, because understanding the reasons and the consequences of WWI will help to prevent the Third World War" author Attila Szalay-Berzeviczy (here pictured in France, 2018) told History of War*

FOOTSTEPS

Belgium (2017) This image of a line of troops seen in silhouette passing along a small ridge on their way to Hooge re-creates the famous photo taken by Australian photographer Frank Hurley in 1917 near Hooge

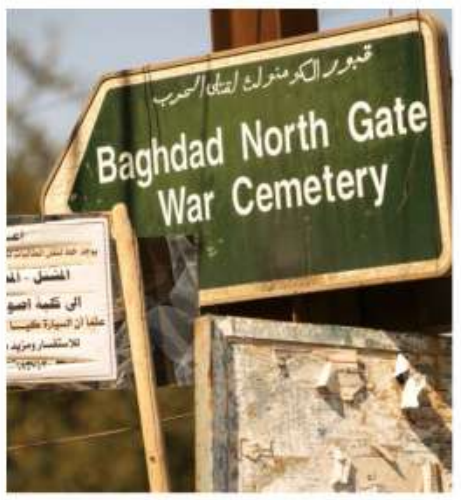
***Below:** Belgium (2015) Attila's photography came to rely heavily on the passionate work of local re-enactors. "Without their dedicated work I would not have been able to take the readers of the book back in time to 1914-18 with a sense of how it must have been for those who experienced the war first-hand," he told History of War*

***Below:** United Kingdom (2018) The scene of the German stormtroopers going over the top on 21 March 1918 was photographed in the private estate of the military historian Andrew Robertshaw with the help of British re-enactors*

Images © Attila Szalay-Berzeviczy / MCC Press Kft

Jordan (2019) The Hejaz Railway was originally built to transport pilgrims from the city of Damascus to the city of Medina. It was completed in 1908, but was severely damaged during the First World War by the Arab Revolt and Lawrence of Arabia. Parts of the Hejaz Railway survive, and some of the sections are still functioning

Below: *Iraq (2019) On 11 March 1917, after a series of defeats, the Anglo-Indian troops captured Baghdad from the Turks following two years of heavy fighting during the Mesopotamian Campaign*



Below: *Cameroon (2016) The Limbe War Cemetery at the foothills of Mount Cameroon is a reminder of the fighting that took place there between 1914 and 1916*

Below: *France (2017) Over 10,000 Canadians gathered under the soaring pylons of the Vimy Memorial on 9 April 2017 to mark the 100th anniversary of that fateful battle, and to reflect on its enduring legacy*

Below: *Palestine (2019) Three major battles were launched in 1917 by British and dominion forces to capture Gaza, which was the heart of the main Ottoman defensive position in southern Palestine*

Above: *Serbia (2016) During a brutal six-day long battle in August 1914, the ragtag Serbian army repelled and defeated the formidable Austro-Hungarian army, achieving the very first Allied victory in the Great War. Every August, civilians and representatives of the Serbian military gather in Tekeris, situated on the south-eastern slopes of the mountain. The village is the site of the annual commemoration of the battle at the Memorial Ossuary Cer. The grandiose memorial that proclaims "Your deeds are immortal" stands proudly over the mausoleum that holds the remains of some 3,500 soldiers who fell in this area over a century ago*

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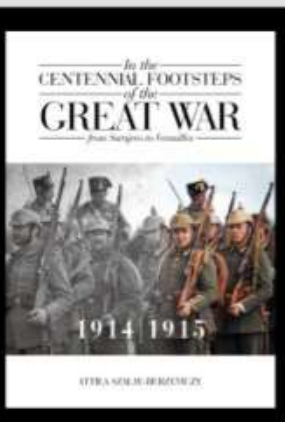
In the Centennial Footsteps of the Great War Volume 1 (1914 – 1915)



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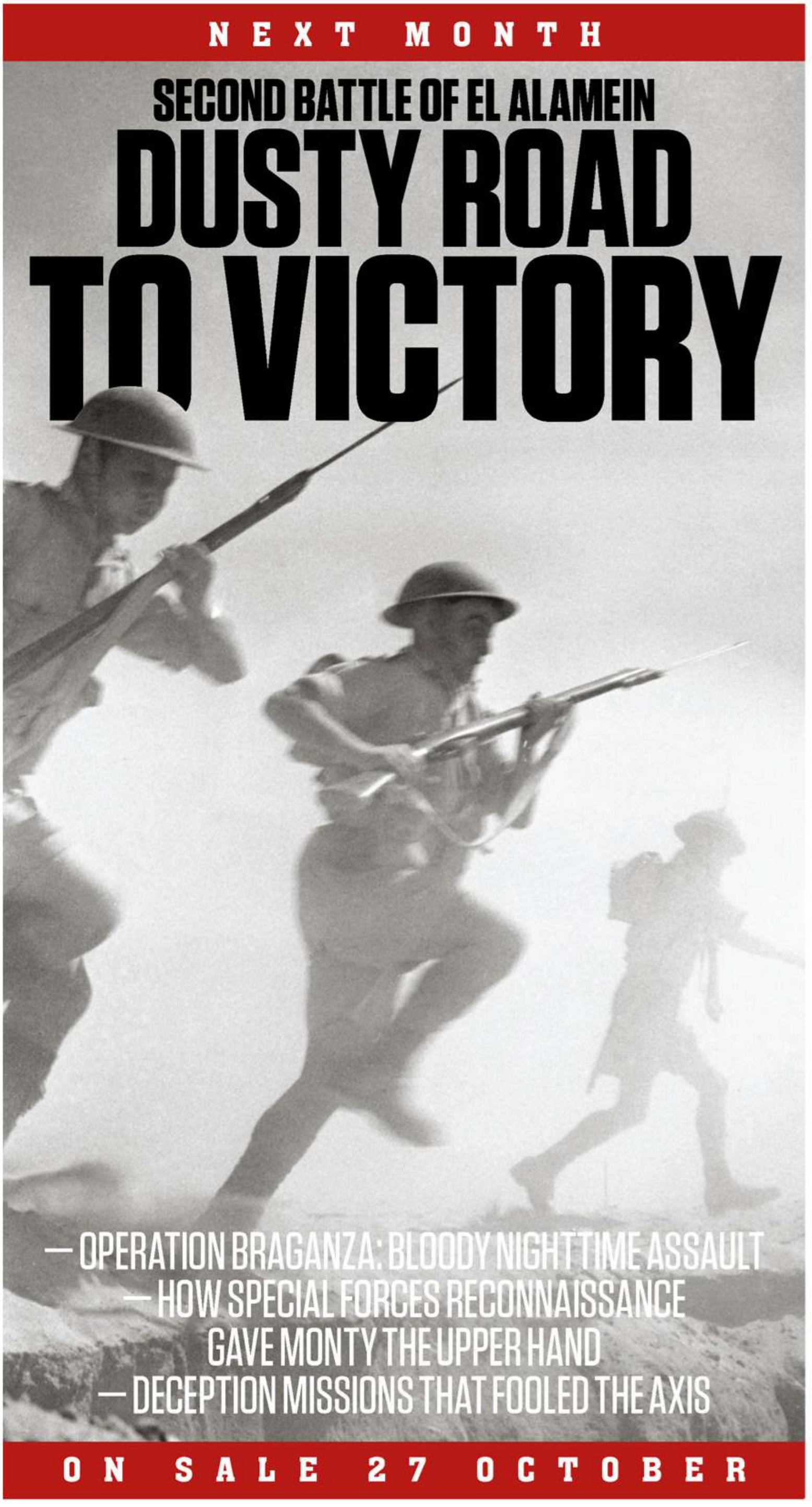
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GEORGE WASHINGTON'S CAMP CHEST

The Founding Father ate well on campaign during the American Revolutionary War, with the aid of this elaborate field kitchen utensil box

The first president and 'Father of the Nation' of the United States of America, George Washington, is a seminal figure in American history. His reputation was forged in the fire of revolution when he commanded the Continental Army against the British during the American Revolutionary War.
A wealthy gentleman farmer from an English colonist family, Washington shared many of his army's privations – but not when it came to food.

While he was on campaign, Washington carried a camp chest. Otherwise known as canteens, these boxes of utensils and cooking equipment were used by 18th century officers and their staff to make life in the field more comfortable. As commander of the Continental Army, Washington's chest was equipped to enable him to eat meals fit for a general.

The chest is a remarkable example from the period in that its collection of utensils is complete. It contains plates, platters and pots made from tin, as well as glass condiment containers. The knives and forks have black ivory handles and other items include a candle stand, tinder box and folding gridiron.

Washington owned several camp chests, one of which was captured from a British ship and sent to him in October 1778. Although he suffered the same hardships as his men during the early part of the war, Washington's later success was reflected in the items he carried on campaign. By 1782, his camp equipment included various travel beds, tables and tents. He eventually had to use two horses specially selected by the Continental Army's quartermaster general just to carry his camp chests.

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The camp chest forms part of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington DC. For more information visit:

www.americanhistory.si.edu

"WASHINGTON HAD TO USE TWO HORSES SPECIALLY SELECTED BY THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL JUST TO CARRY HIS CAMP CHESTS"

This camp chest dates from c.1775-76. It is known that Washington purchased two sets of leather-covered canteens on 3 May 1776

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